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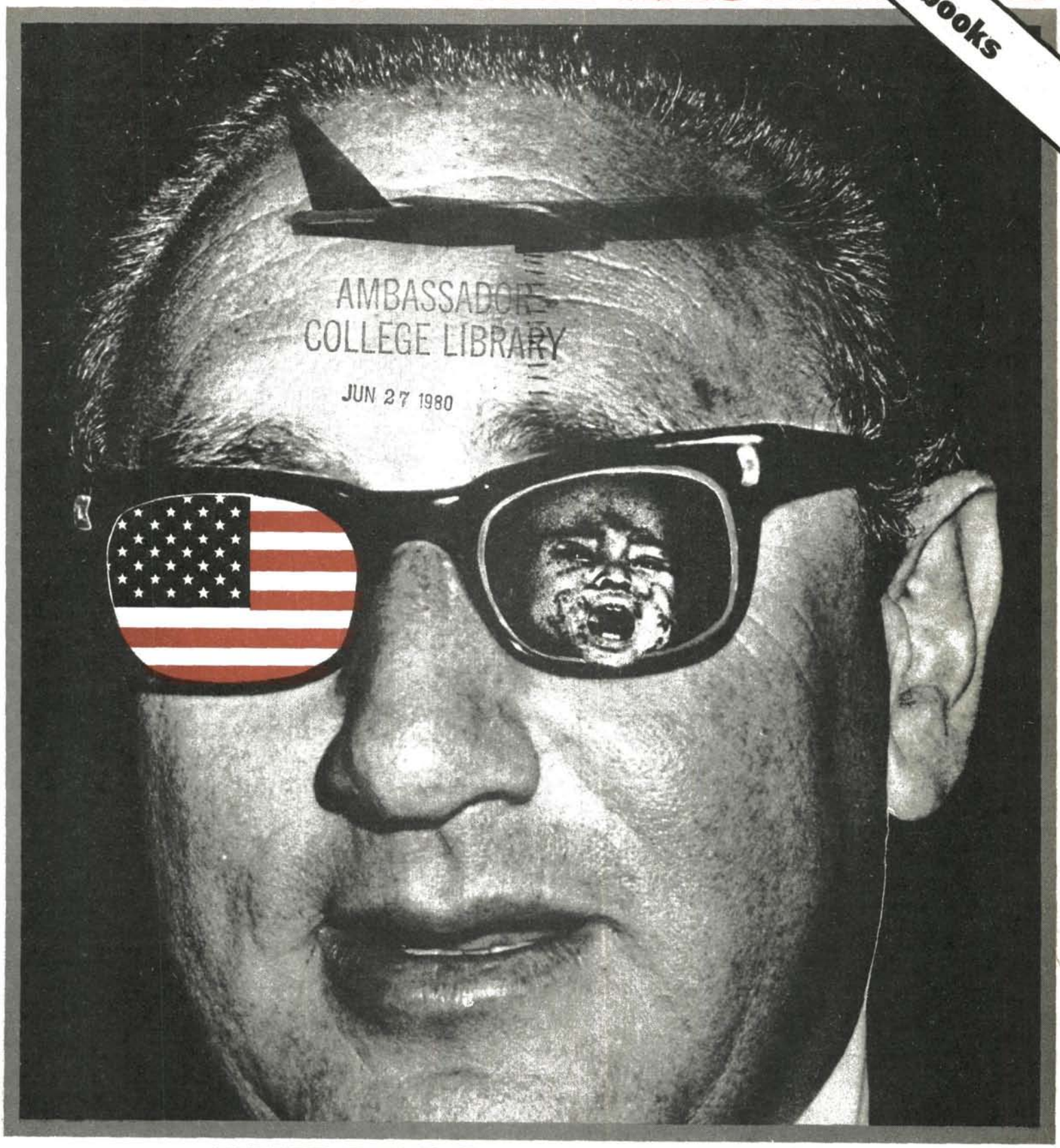
Art books



THE KISSINGER MIND

Monetarism & Britain's hidden billions

Science for the people/CAP: why Britain shouldn't pay

Penelope Mortimer on Mailer & Wolfe

John Arden: socialism & culture/Peter Porter: Britten's operas

John Spurling: Matisse & Picasso/Patricia Hewitt: Women MPs

Ronald Hayman on Erwin Piscator/Paul Foot on Harold Wilson

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NEW STATESMAN
Volume 98 23 November 1979 · No 2540

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Crass, futile and illegal

BRITISH LEYLAND'S main charge against Longbridge works convenor Derek Robinson with which they justify his dismissal is based on a falsehood. He has been charged along with three other communist BL workers with putting his name to two pamphlets, one in March after the pay parity dispute and another in October during the ballot over the proposed 25,000 redundancies. In the second, he was said to have advocated ignoring the result of the ballot. A BL spokesman said: 'If he had advocated opposition before the ballot, there could perhaps be some justification, but surely not afterward. That is purely disruptive and contrary to the majority view of our employees'. The pamphlet did not advocate disregarding the result of the ballot. It had been in preparation since Spring and was circulating before the ballot; indeed the existence of this pamphlet was referred to in the NS before the ballot result. The pamphlet also specifically said transfer of work from closed plants should be accepted where workers in a plant agree to a closure.

But even if Robinson had written the pamphlet after the ballot the sacking is a disgraceful attack both on an individual's freedom of expression and a trade union representative's activities. As chairman of the BL cars combine, democratically elected by fellow shop stewards as works convenor of Longbridge and employee of the company since he was 21, Robinson should be at liberty to express an opinion, even when it runs counter to the media's banal toadyism of Edwardes.

Robinson's dismissal makes one wonder what level of criticism Sir Michael Edwardes *is* prepared to tolerate. Throughout the ballot no national newspaper bothered to look at the assumptions of the 'Edwardes recovery'. Not even the engineering union executive considered whether the BL management had provided enough basic information for the workers to make a judgment on the value of the Edwardes plan. The local media publicised the size of the redundancy payments while the *Birmingham Mail*'s considered contribution was a three-part smear of Robinson's private life. In that context one would have thought, if only to keep a show of democracy, Edwardes could have tolerated a pamphlet which, in line with current TGWU policy, said: 'The most important task is to raise the issues, develop the understanding and promote the alternative to the Edwardes plan'.

Edwardes' attempt to denigrate Robinson by saying that the combine of which Robinson is chairman is not recognised by the management and unions reeks of duplicity. During the Ryder years BL combine members were integral to the joint management-union participation scheme; indeed Robinson was widely criticised by fellow workers and the left for being over-enthusiastic about participation. Robinson was also at the centre of management discussions over the technology to be used for the new mini at Longbridge: he still sat on the BL joint negotiating council.

We now have a chairman of Britain's publicly owned car industry who is so out of touch that he believes there are four moles beavering away to destroy Leyland and who believes that by destroying them first he will be able to greatly weaken shop steward power and thus increase productivity to some imagined European height. It is a simplistic style of thought already being proved wrong by the Longbridge walk-out that could only flourish in the first months of a Tory government, obsessed by industrial life without unions.

The mole who never was

TEN YEARS AGO, it was unwelcome and risky for journalists to rake across the ashes of postwar British Intelligence disasters or to investigate the career of Kim Philby and his like. When teams from the *Sunday Times* and the *Observer* did so they were subject to direct legal and other threats, and a campaign of subtle official vilification. That climate has changed, and journalistic hordes are now freely to be seen chasing very much tinier targets than Philby; occasionally they get a bite.

So it was for Mr Andrew Boyle whose history of these matters – *The Climate of Treason* – has led to the revelation of the confessions of Sir Anthony Blunt. We reported last week that, despite the innuendo in which Boyle's book was wrapped, it contained no substantiated history of what his code-named 'fourth man' did to merit the title of 'spy'. Nothing of proven substance could be disentangled from his – in fact, very brief – references to Blunt. In these circumstances, we found the evidence lacking, and Blunt innocent. Mrs Thatcher and Blunt himself have now made it clear that we were wrong.

Blunt was a mole of little substance, certainly with respect to numbers one to three in the present line-up. Kim Philby was responsible for many scores of deaths. It is yet unclear whether Blunt's slipping extra information to the Soviet Union during the war did good, harm, or just had no particular effect. His 1951 errands on behalf of Guy Burgess were clearly acts of extreme foolishness, but they are hardly the stuff of wholesale treachery. Yet this has fired off the predictable Fleet Street moral crusade, which ranges from the simply wrong ('The Spy in the Palace', which Blunt never was) to triumphant charges up wrong alleys, such as the *Sunday Telegraph's* long exposure of someone else's deadly misdeeds in the wartime Special Operations Executive. The tabloid construction of master-mind Blunt is wholly fallacious; he wasn't the recruiter for Guy Burgess, he was recruited. He wasn't the tipster who gave Burgess the nod to flee; indeed Philby years ago confessed to that. As is already quite clear, there are several others, dead or alive, whose complicity is as great or as small as Blunt's, and who have been similarly protected. We erred in calling Blunt innocent because the history of the crusade against minor roleplayers in the Philby affair has had an absurd track record. There was Donald Beves, misidentified in *The Times*; Professor Arthur Pigou and Professor Rudolf Peierls gravely libelled in another very recent account; and a clutch of other un-named but closely characterised published revelations of moles and fourth men. Like a blunderbuss, from time to time a few pellets hit target, but the main result is an indiscriminate mess.

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NOTES

Astronomical costs of council house sales

Bernard Kilroy writes: A recent BBC *Panorama* programme on council house sales had to ignore long-term financial effects, because they couldn't find a single council which had done a full appraisal, except Leeds. And Leeds had been discredited because of its unrealistic assumptions, as shown in Shelter's magazine *Roof* in May 1977.

Under pressure from the imminent Tory Bill empowering every council tenant to enforce a right to buy and with discounts up to 50 per cent (as Andrew Arden indicates, below), councils have been doing some sums. And getting anxious. Last week the Association of Metropolitan Authorities, which is controlled by a small Tory majority, sent in their response to the Government's consultation paper. They are entrusted with the finances of half the country's council houses, and were seeking an assurance that the Government would compensate authorities against possible losses.

In April, ex-businessman Michael Heseltine was claiming that Nottingham alone had made a profit of £18 million on the sale of houses worth £40 million. How? He compared sales at market values (after discounts) against historic costs on the books. He took first year effects and omitted net rent income over the future life of the assets (NS 27 April 1979). In fifty detailed pages a Nottingham housing group has analysed the effect of 1,583 sales during 1977/78 by deducting from their present value the net loss of future rents. The City had made no such appraisal. But threatened with a High Court action it provided some raw data for the study.

The group concludes that Nottingham ratepayers will eventually lose £75 million on just over 5,000 sales during the three years from 1976 to '79. For every 100,000 sales the Government achieves country-wide – its target is 250,000 a year – some £1,200 million will be lost when mortgage relief is added in. That's more than our net yearly contribution to the EEC. The actual examples from Nottingham will carry more weight than national ones presented in recent guidelines by the council treasurers' association, The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy. By chance, CIPFA found the pros and cons of sales finely poised. But a third of its examples assumed that management and maintenance costs could rise 4 percentage points over inflation. The Nottingham study agreed that sales would make a surplus if that happened. But it would mean, said the study, that in 60 years' time rents would still be £6 in real terms while maintenance and management costs would have risen from £2 a week to £20 in 1977 values! Otherwise sales could produce surpluses only if equally unrealistic assumptions were made about future rent increases – for instance, that they would fall by 3 per cent a year in real terms for 60 years. In fact, they have *risen* by 3 per cent a year in real terms since the war! This kind of evidence will scotch the suggestion that the effects of sales are 'unpredictable'. There are growing anxieties, too, about the effects on the mortgage market. Another case of spring fever and autumn chill?

**Where Have All the Assets Gone?* from 83 Beauvale Road, Nottingham. Price £1.15.

Will Scrubs inquiry be unbiased?

Anna Coote writes: The NEW STATESMAN drew attention two weeks ago to the fact that the Director of the South-East Region of the Prison Service sent his congratulations to officers from Wandsworth prison who had taken part in the 'MUFTI' attack on D wing at Wormwood Scrubs on 31 August. The Regional Director, Mr Keith Gibson, is now in charge of the internal inquiry which was set up by the Home Office in lieu of the public inquiry demanded by bodies such as PROP, the Howard League and the National council for Civil Liberties, when it emerged that more than 50 inmates had incurred serious injuries. Below we reproduce the relevant paragraph of the report from the governor of Wandsworth to his Board of Visitors. The Home Office claims this does not undermine Mr Gibson's fitness to conduct the inquiry: it told the NS this week that the letter of congratulations (which went, incidentally, not only to Wandsworth officers, but to those from Brixton, Pentonville, Latchmere House and Ashford who also took part in the attack) was signed not by Mr Gibson himself, but by his immediate deputy Mr J. H. Absalom.

Boost for homeowners

Andrew Arden writes: Clear details of the government's housing policies are emerging from consultation papers on the forthcoming Housing Bill which are now being circulated by the Department of the Environment. Notwithstanding the massive spending cuts the Tories are making in other areas, local authorities will be under an absolute obligation to provide loans for tenants who wish to buy their council homes (at the generous discounts which are under offer) and who cannot obtain mortgage finance elsewhere. Loans may be up to

HM PRISON
WANDSWORTH SW18

GOVERNOR'S REPORT TO THE BOARD OF VISITORS FOR THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER 1979.

The Regional Director and the Governor of Wormwood Scrubs have highly commended the staff from this prison who took part in the control of the riot at Wormwood Scrubs. They went in under trained leadership and dressed in riot containing equipment and were quickly seen to be the most disciplined body of men available to the Governor of Wormwood Scrubs. They obeyed their every command and quickly cleared the Hall of the prisoners who had refused to co-operate with the Wormwood Scrubs staff.

26 September 1979

A Portch – Governor

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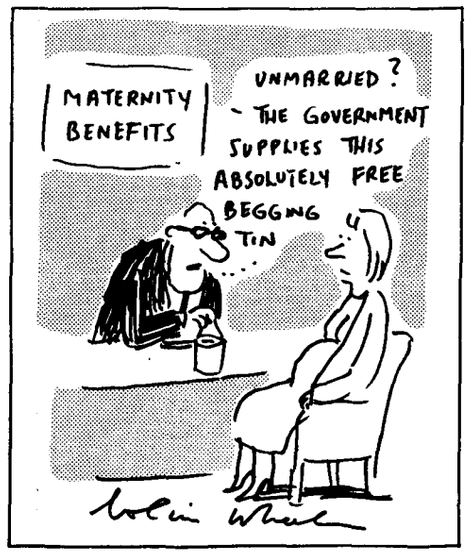
100 per cent of the purchase price. And to ensure maximum take-up of this dubious new form of state benefit, local authorities will be able, when calculating personal financial eligibility for a mortgage, to take into account the incomes of up to three additional members of the purchaser's household, even if they are not to be joint purchasers. As another example of the government's generosity, prospective buyers will be able to pay a deposit of £100 which will ensure their right to buy at the current value for up to two years in the future.

The government proposes to abolish the present rule under which no grant for improvement or repair is available if a house has had tenants in it during the year before application, and which is intended to slow down the eviction-speculation-gentrification cycle that has so dogged the urban renewal programme. Similarly for the chop is the provision that a person has to repay all or part of an improvement grant if he or she sells the property within five years. This, too, was designed to benefit existing residents, rather than to set up an area for middle-class takeover.

Like the previous government, the Tories propose to make improvement and repairs grants available to tenants as well as to owner-occupiers. As we have already suggested (NS 30 March 1979), many tenants will be unable to raise a mortgage because of the insufficient quality of their interests in the property: they will turn to fringe financial institutions for money to meet their share of the improvement costs, and this will probably lead to financial hardship, debt, rent arrears and, in some cases, eviction. The present government has not heeded the remarks of the DoE under Labour, when it considered (and rejected) the idea of making such grants available to private sector tenants: 'The carrying out of improvements with the aid of tenant grants could provide the landlord with an incentive to repossess.' Instead, the Tories propose to make these grants available to public and private sector tenants alike.

Still under the title of improvement and repairs, a further subsidy to owner-occupiers is to be found.



Under a programme known as AIMS, local authorities sometimes buy up dilapidated properties themselves, carry out improvements, and sell them back, at cost of acquisition and improvement, into owner-occupation. But this can prove expensive and insufficiently competitive. Accordingly, there will soon be a central government subsidy to allow authorities to continue the AIMS programme, but reselling into the market at *less* than the cost of acquisition and improvement.

Money for maternity

Ruth Lister writes: This week sees the second reading of a Private Member's Bill which ought to gain the support of MPs on both sides of the more controversial battle around the Corrie Bill. Kevin McNamara's Maternity Grant Bill, which is fifth in the Private Member's Ballot, seeks to remove two glaring anomalies in the payment of the maternity grant. The case for the Bill has been reinforced by two reports published last week by the Money for Maternity Campaign. The first, *Born Poor*, illustrates the problems faced by some of the most vulnerable mothers-to-be who do not qualify for the grant because they do not satisfy the contribution test. Nearly one in ten mothers does not receive the grant and it is primarily the young, unmarried mothers who need it most who lose out. It is often argued that these mothers can get help from supplementary benefit. But this help is discretionary and is available neither to those under 16 nor to any woman who is cohabiting with a man. (This is a good example of one half of the social security system treating cohabitation like marriage while the other half says a woman cannot claim maternity grant on her cohabitee's contribution record because she is not married to him.) A quarter of the lone mothers interviewed in the Money for Maternity study had received no financial help whatever with the cost of the newborn baby; many had got into debt as a result.

As well as making the grant payable to all mothers-to-be the Bill would raise it from £25 to £85. This would do no more than restore the grant to its real value in 1969, when it was last increased. Indeed, *Mothers and Babies First*?*, a study of the grant by Ian Kendall, shows that it needs to be £97 to restore it to its peak value in 1963. It also reveals that the grant is now worth less in real terms than when it was introduced in 1911 and compares badly with that paid in countries poorer than Britain. To increase the grant to £85 and extend it to all mothers would cost £43m., which is unlikely to endear it to the Government. Just to abolish the contribution test would cost no more than £1.5 million, which surely even for this government should not be too high a price to remedy such a glaring injustice? However, according to some press reports, the DHSS is considering abolishing the grant altogether.

*50p from 255 Kentish Town Road, London NW5.

EDUCATION Bartering over bare bones

Rick Rogers writes: It was appropriate that the Government should announce its intention to establish a skeleton curriculum last week. For it coincided with the start of the horsetrading over an Education Bill designed to produce a skeleton education system.

But as the committee stage of the Bill got underway, it was clear that the Tories were coming under increasing pressure from their own supporters to back down on some key clauses. What hurts most are the proposals to relax the duty on local education authorities (LEAs) to provide school transport.

The current round of spending cuts reveals the problems ahead. Parents in rural areas, already badly hit by school closures, are finding they are having to pay up to get their children to more distant schools. Handicapped children are being charged for getting to special schools. The religious bodies are badly rattled too. For several years now they have been shutting down primary schools to fund new secondary school provision (or buying up comprehensive schools to turn into selective voluntary schools, as is currently going on in Tory-controlled Ealing). This redeployment means more parents who want their children to go to a denominational school are now faced with massive fares bills. On average over half the pupils of a denominational school are currently entitled to free travel to school (in Durham, it is 80 per cent). But already Oxfordshire has decided to end all free transport to denominational schools. More LEAs will follow suit once the Bill goes through — despite assurances from the Education Secretary that they won't.

Cutting school transport — or making it a deal more costly — slices right through the propaganda plank in the Bill of enlarging parental choice. The message more and more parents are picking up is that if they want a wider choice of schools, they'll have to pay for it.

Higher fares and fewer school buses will also put up the truancy rate. A recent survey by the Society of Education Officers confirmed what most parents and teachers knew anyway — that truancy is on the increase and 'requires immediate attention'. As it stands now, the Bill will make truancy more common. Child Poverty Action Group has plenty of evidence of children staying off school because of an inability to pay bus fares. Often the parents keep children away for a day or two a week to save money. A detailed CPAG survey in 1976 revealed that the current statutory obligations (free transport for under 8s living over 2 miles from school and for over 8s living over 3 miles away) left many children at risk either by having to walk to school along dangerous roads or by 'encouraging' them to drift into truancy. Variations in the policies of bus operators over what to charge children (half-fare, two-thirds-fare?) and when to regard them as adults farewise (it ranges from 14 to 17) just compound the problems.

The present system is far from perfect. The anomalies were set out in a Department of Education working party report (*School transport*, 1973). Then Education Secretary, Thatcher had set up the inquiry following concern at the rapid rise in the cost to LEAs of providing school transport. Ironically, the report concluded that 'more money is needed for school transport'. It also pressed for a national flat-rate fare for all journeys, with a new means test. Nothing was done at the time as the LEAs would not agree new arrangements. Now some Tory MPs are reviving the flat fare idea to head off a major row that could both delay the Bill and foul a few constituency nests in the Tory tribal homelands.

The inevitable guillotining of the Bill may leave some nasty elements unchanged. CPAG is concerned that too much time spent on the early clauses will prevent a proper statutory framework being worked out for LEAs to provide free school meals. The existing clause offers no guarantee to needy families.

First on the agenda, though, is school government Opposition MPs have tabled a series of amendments, including the right of pupils, non-teaching staff and the local community to have representation; and for parity of membership between teacher, parent and LEA — so denying an LEA majority on governing bodies.

The main aim of the Opposition is to ensure that the rejigged governing bodies are able to cope with the Tory-style education system of 1984. But some Labour councillors are as keen as the Tories to keep control of school government in LEA hands. They also like the proposal for LEA-dominated local appeal committees on school allocations — another rubber-stamp device to outflank the aggrieved parents.

New clauses put down so far seek to oblige LEAs to maintain grant schemes to help needy parents buy school uniform; to impose a complete ban on corporal punishment; and to give parents the right of access to their child's school record. None stands much chance. There is also a private member's Bill on school records waiting for its second reading. That seems another no-hoper. Last Friday it was listed to follow a Bill on the protection of animals and one on deer. The records bill wasn't debated.

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The vanishing billions

LAST WEEK'S massive increase in interest rates – which will cause distress to millions of households and thousands of businesses – was justified as the necessary price to cure inflation; the 'nasty but necessary medicine'. There are signs that not even the government's supporters believe this: one Tory backbencher went so far as to express his disquiet in the columns of the *Guardian* this week. Tory economics rests on the belief that increases in the money supply cause inflation and the high level of government borrowing pushes up the money supply. This week a mighty blow was struck at this theory.

On Tuesday in his inaugural lecture David Hendry, professor of Econometrics at the London School of Economics, showed without much difficulty that there was no evidence to support the idea that increases in the money supply caused increases in prices and, more startlingly, suggested that, in real terms the government is not a big borrower but often a saver, suggesting that attempts to reduce the borrowing requirement may be a major cause of the recession.

Professor Hendry's lecture – an edited version of which we print below — addressed itself mainly to defending econometrics against the charge levelled at it by Keynes that it was merely alchemy. Much of his lecture dealt with the limitations of the current state of British econometrics ('we are a long way from producing answers') and the massive gaps in British economics, with its inadequate, not properly understood data.

The crucial point which Hendry makes against monetarism is that it is only by assuming there is a connection between money supply and prices in the first place, that one can establish the connection; and even then the figures are just as capable of not proving the case.

It is in making his case about the difficulty of measuring what is happening in the economy, and government's willingness to act on what amount to hunches, that Hendry highlights the low level of real government borrowing. As a big net borrower of money, when interest rates are below the inflation rate, the government is increasing its wealth in real terms. Using calculations recently produced by the Bank of England (eight years after they were first requested) Hendry argues that after the inflation adjustment, the government has in some recent years, been a saver rather than a borrower in real terms.

The implications for policy are profound: it means that in cutting the PSBR the government is not just wrong; it is doing the *exact opposite* of what is needed. By not spending its surplus, but by trying to increase it further by more cuts in government programmes, the government deepens the recession, but then finds that the pressure to increase spending is greater. Straightforwardly, most of us understand what inflation does to our savings and wages, but this understanding has not been extended to the government sector.

Killing off monetarism is not going to be easy, as it draws its inspiration from simple ideas, like throwing pound notes out of aeroplanes, and homespun phrases such as 'you can't spend what you do not earn'. Part of Hendry's case is that the economy, the result of centuries of experience, is an extremely complex structure. And, as he admits, his own discipline, which may help explain it, is increasingly inaccessible to the lay person. Some of these difficulties are evident from the article below, but if the argument against monetarism and the absurd constraints it claims to put on our economy and society is to be won, getting to grips with these issues may be an essential starting point.

ECONOMETRICS HAS NOT had an easy time ever since Lord Keynes' famous review, in 1939, of Jan Tinbergen's book *Statistical Testing of Business-Cycle Theories*. In an oft quoted passage Keynes accepts that Tinbergen's work is objective but continues:

> No one could be more frank, more painstaking, more free from subjective bias or *parti pris* than Professor Tinbergen. There is no one, therefore, so far as human qualities go, whom it would be safer to trust with black magic. That there is anyone I would trust with it at the present stage, or that this brand of *statistical alchemy* is ripe to become a branch of science, I am not yet persuaded. But Newton, Boyle and Locke all played with Alchemy. So let him continue.

For Keynes, the issue is one of timing. Despite his trenchant criticisms he does not, as some seem to believe, liken econometrics to a theoryless reading of entrails. But an echo of this debate recurs in the early seventies. For example, following a sharp critique of mathematical economics as having 'no links with concrete facts', David Worswick* suggested that econometricians are not 'engaged in forging tools to arrange and measure actual facts so much as making a marvellous array of *pretend*-tools.' Wassily Leontief has characterised econometrics as 'an attempt to compensate for the glaring weakness of the data base available to us by the widest possible use of more and more sophisticated statistical techniques.'

Rather than abandon the study of econometrics or reply by quoting equally eminent authorities who hold more favourable views, I should like instead to demonstrate the scientific stabs of econometrics by first showing alchemy at work *empirically*. This will make it easier to understand the sense in which the quoted criticisms are valid and, how, the role of scientific method in econometrics can be enhanced.

ECONOMETRICIANS have found their Philosophers' Stone: it is called regression analysis and is used for transforming data into 'significant' results. Deception is easily practised from false recipes intended to stimulate useful findings and derogatively referred to by the profession as 'nonsense regressions'.

The graphs below examine the relationship between money supply and prices and at first seems to confirm that there is a close relationship. However, after dealing with the 'nuisance' that the deviations are systematic rather than random, we are left with a model in which the money supply no longer significantly affects prices and which fails the tests designed to check its predictive qualities. In other words, we can make 'naive monetarism' work or not depending on the specification of the model. Indeed, my own 'Hendry's Law', that inflation is caused by Britain's cummulative rainfall, produces a much better model, which passes the prediction test.

The statistical problem illustrated here was analysed as long ago as 1926 and has been re-emphasised many times since. But the crucial factor for my argument is that *before* doing these regressions the relevant statistical theory enabled me to deduce what would occur and hence construct the desired examples at my first attempt – what could be more scientific? Econometrics understands this problem and has tests for the validity of empirical models: the models quoted, including Hendry's Law, duly fail such tests.

ECONOMETRICS – Alchemy or Science?

Professor Hendry began his lecture by distinguishing between alchemy and science and defining econometrics. The now dominant pejorative meaning of alchemy – as recipes for simulating gold using alloys of base metals – is straightforward enough. But 'precisely what "Science" denotes is remarkably unclear'.

'"SCIENCE" is a *public process*. It uses systems of concepts called theories to help interpret and unify observation statements called data; in turn, the data are used to check or test the theories. Theory creation may be *inductive* but demonstration and testing are *deductive*, although in inexact subjects testing will usually involve statistical inference. Theories which are at once simple, general *and* coherent are valued as they aid productive and precise scientific practice. In particular, restrictiveness increases the hazards of possible rejection and hence augments "plausibility" if disconfirmation does *not* occur. Although objectivity and potential falsifiability against data are crucial to science, in practice observations are theory dependent, rejections can be rationalised (often leading to degenerate research programmes) and even when evidence is highly *un*favourable and reasonable alternative theories exist, views are usually changed only slowly: after all, we are discussing a *human* endeavour. As Baron Turgot put it in 1749: "Suppositions which are arrived at on the basis of a small number of poorly understood facts yield to suppositions which are less absurd, although no more true."

"**ECONOMETRICS**", in the broad sense, commences as an analysis of the relationships between economic variables (such as quantities and prices, or incomes and ▶

*Worswick is still Director of the National Institute of Economic and Social Research.

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◀ expenditures) by abstracting the main phenomena of interest and stating theories thereof in mathematical form. The empirical usefulness of the resulting "models" is evaluated using statistical information of supposed relevance and Econometrics in this, narrow sense concerns the interpretation and analysis of such data in the context of "established" economic theory.

Thus, Econometric Theory is the study of the properties of data generation processes, of techniques for analysing economic data, methods of estimating numerical magnitudes of unknown parameters and procedures for testing economic hypotheses. Applied and empirical econometrics are sometimes regarded as separate "engineering" branches of the subject, literally involving the mere application of standard statistical methods to economic data. Since, to quote Ragnar Frisch, "the mutual penetration of quantitative economic theory and statistical observation is the essence of econometrics", the greatest loss from our inability to experiment may be the artificial divisions it promotes.

We need quantitative empirical knowledge to answer questions involving changes in economic variables. Econometric models play a central role in modern economics in *predicting* the consequences of changes, *forecasting* likely future outcomes and *controlling* variables to attain objectives. Substantial resources have been devoted to empirical macro-econometric models which comprise hundreds or even thousands of statistically calibrated equations, each purporting to represent some autonomous facet of the behaviour of economic agents as consumers and producers, the whole intended to describe accurately the overall evolution of the economy.'

There are even theories which reveal that prediction need not be a powerful test of a model in economics since false models can manifest parameter constancy.

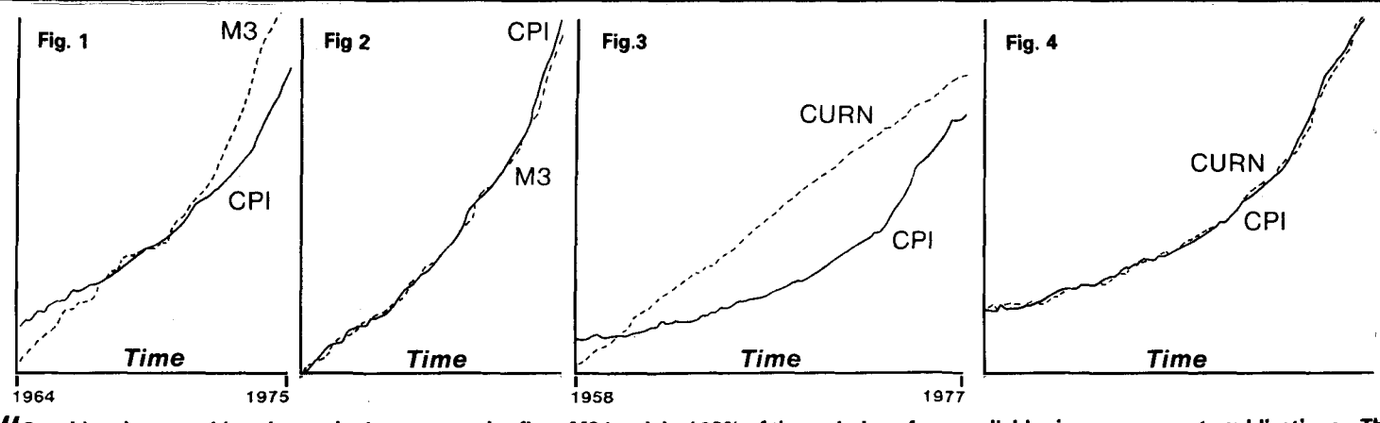
Such understanding is well past the stage of alchemy. And even if some editors can be persuaded to publish on the basis of econometric fools-gold, *caveat emptor*, but do not denigrate the whole subject. The case for scientific econometrics rests instead on *best* practice empirical work; and an essential requirement of any useful model in a *non-experimental* subject is that it can explain why any previous false models provided their observed results.

Keynes forsaw the main econometric problems and forty years after he wrote, his review remains compulsory reading for all who seek to apply statistical methods to economic data. Taken literally Keynes comes close to asserting that no economic theory is ever testable; in which case, of course, economics itself ceases to be scientific – I doubt if Keynes intended this implication. However, his objections make an excellent list of what might be called 'problems with estimating regressions', namely: using an incomplete set of determining factors; building models with unobservable variables (such as expectations) estimated from badly measured data based on index numbers (Keynes calls this the 'frightful inadequacy of most of the statistics'); obtaining 'spurious' correlations from the use of 'proxy' variables and simultaniety as well as the 'mine' which Mr Yule placed 'under the contraptions of optimistic statisticians'; being unable to separate the distinct effects of multicollinear variables; assuming linear functional forms not knowning the appropriate dimensions of the regressors; mis-specifying the dynamic reactions and lag lengths; incorrectly pre-filtering the data; invalidly inferring 'causes' from correlations; predicting inaccurately; confusing the statistical with the economic 'significance' of the results and failing to relate economic theory to econometrics. To Keynes' list of problems, I would add stochastic mis-specification, incorrect assumption of independence, inadequate sample sizes, aggregation, lack of structural identification and an inability to refer back uniquely from observed empirical results to any given initial theory.

THE SUBJECT IS exceedingly complicated but not hopeless. Considerable progress has been made on the technical aspects, such as studying the consequences of the various 'problems' just listed, designing means of detecting these, developing methods which mitigate some of their ill effects or handle several complications at once, and analysing the properties of estimators when the sample size is small. Much of this technical work is essential background to understanding and correctly interpreting empirical findings and is neither a symptom of alchemy nor justifies David Worswick's criticism of 'econometric escalation.'

Unfortunately, empirical practice has ten-

What causes inflation: money or Hendry's Law?



"Consider the age-old and seemingly unresolved controversy concerning the effect of money (M) – here personal sector notes and coins and bank deposits (M3) – on prices (p) – here the consumer price index (CPI). In Figure 1 above these variables are plotted on a logarithmic scale using seasonally adjusted quarterly time-series data for the UK for the years 1964-1975. Advance warning that 'alchemy' may be present could be gleaned from the letters to *The Times*, in April 4-6 1977 where John Llewellyn and Roger Witcomb establish a higher correlation between annual inflation and cases of dysentry in Scotland (one year earlier) than Professor Ivor Mills obtained between inflation and the rate of change of excess money supply (two years before).

A plot of M3 against CPI, seems to confirm their close relationship (the correlation is greater than 0.99). Regression estimates of the explanation of CPI by M3 yield an impressive fit as M3 'explains' 98% of the variation of CPI and has a 'significant' coefficient. The systematic deviations can be 'eliminated' by suitably transforming the equation to introduce lagged values of the variables; this has been done in Figure 2. The fit is improved and the squared correlation is now 0.99 but the money variables no longer significantly affect CPI and a prediction test rejects the constancy of the parameters. Evidently, we can make money matter or not by appropriate specification of the model and hence deception (primarily of oneself) is easy by selecting whichever finding corroborates one's theory'.

The second example clarifies the issue; Hendry's law of inflation is that a certain variable (of great interest in this country) is the 'real cause' of rising prices. Moreover, I am 'certain' that the variable c is exogenous, that causality is from my variable to prices and (so far as I am aware) c is outside government control although data are readily available in government publications. The quarterly time series now seasonally *un*adjusted for the years 1958 to 1977 for c (denoted CURN) and p (CPI) are shown in Figure 3. There is evidently a close but non-linear relationship and regression analysis assuming a quadratic equation yields a 'good fit'. Assuming an autocorrelated error process produces the results which I anticipated (Figure 4); the fit is spectacular, the parameters are 'highly significant', there is no residual autocorrelation and the predictive test does *not* reject the model. My theory performs decidedly better than the naive monetary one, but, alas, my variable is simply Britain's cumulative rainfall. Clearly it is meaningless to talk about 'confirming' or 'corroborating' theories when such spurious results are so easily obtained. On the other hand, since correlation does not entail any direction of causation, perhaps the rapid inflation explains our wet weather!"

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ded to lag well behind the theory 'frontier', with unfortunate consequences. Well before the oil-crisis, critics suggested that macro-econometric models were seriously mis-specified and would have no predictive value if the correlation structure of the variables altered. Many of the specification mistakes were obvious and relatively easy to correct and doing so might have helped to prevent the models failing so badly just when they were most needed. Even so, the oil crisis and other government induced events are one of the few ways in which false models can be rejected – econometrics being the sole beneficiary from government manipulation of the economy. But would not controlled experiments be more informative than inadvertent and uncontrolled ones? Despite difficulties, some experimentation in economics is going on – such as on the effect of changing tariff structures on energy consumption during the day. But such work merits far greater resources than currently allowed. As Leontief said: 'the scientists have their machines . . . the economists are still waiting for their data.'

Economic data are notoriously unreliable and in an important sense, econometrics is little more than an attempted solution to our acute shortage of decent data. Yet accurate observation is vital. Take, for example, a variable like 'real disposable personal income'. This is extremely difficult to 'measure' accurately and a constant price series of after-tax 'income' of the personal sector bears little relationship to the economists'concept of 'income'. Unfortunately, discrepancies in measuring income may have *major* policy implications. If income is measured using *real* rather than nominal interest rates to ensure that changes in real wealth are equal to real income less real expenditure, then the ratio of consumers' expediture to adjusted income has not fallen particularly sharply, unlike the ratio of the unadjusted series. Thus, the savings ratio 'properly measured' may not have risen at all. And the not-so-obvious converse is that the government may not be in deficit after all. A recent Bank of England study has, at last, done the appropriate 'inflation accounting', with dramatic results. If account is taken of the effect that inflation has had on the real value of financial assets, then the government has frequently been in real surplus (i.e. there has been no real borrowing requirement) and the private sector has been in deficit (see box).

National debt at its lowest since Napoleonic war

THE MAIN FOCUS of government policy is now the massive nominal borrowing by the public sector (the PSBR). However, although the nominal level of national debt has increased rapidly, as David Reid has shown recently, the ratio of national debt to national income – which seems a sensible measure of real public indebtedness was in 1975 similar to the value prevailing at the end of the *last* century and hence close to its *lowest* value since the Napoleonic wars!

The implication of these two statistics – the real government surplus and the falling real debt ratio – are stunning. Jack Hibbert has calculated that in 1957 the public sector was a net debtor to the tune of about 8 per cent of total national wealth; by 1966 it had become a net creditor to a similar extent and by 1975 the public sector owned 26 per cent of net national wealth. The statistics reveal enormous and very rapid real changes behind the monetary veil, although not an intended consequence of any post-war government policy. Yet a further implication of these data is that the current recession, with its high unemployment, may be due in part to the implicit government surplus with the PSBR being a mere monetary epiphenomenon.

The facts in this last conjecture are well established and although other interpretations may be possible, for my purpose the conjecture need not even be correct since my point is that attempts to reduce the PSBR in the *belief* that it is the cause of inflation rather than a consequence of recession, will impose major costs on society *if* that *belief* is *mistaken*. Would it not have been worthwhile to devote rather greater resources to researching the matter beforehand? Yet this government has reduced the SSRC budget – and in its calculations of 'average student costs' implicitly values the entire research output of the university sector at zero. However little the government may value our theories, to base policy on hope or belief really is alchemy.

THE VALID BASIS for the criticism of econometrics is not econometric alchemy, but a mis-allocation of resources *within* econometrics. What should have become a realitively trivial aspect of the subject – namely deriving methods for estimating the parameters of known models' has been accorded the centre of the stage and attention has not been focused on the issues of methodology, inference, model formulation and equation selection.

The economic system is the outcome of centuries of adaptive human behaviour; agents seem to optimise their 'state' given the environment and the environment adapts in response both socially and physically. Econometricians conceptualise this system as a complex non-linear, interdependent dynamical process dependent on agents'expectations and their adjustments, subject to random shocks, and involving many phenomena which are unobservable; relevant time series data are inaccurate, exist for only short periods and for a few major variables; economic theories are highly simplified abstractions usually of a comparative static form invoking many *ceteris paribus* clauses most of which are empirically invalid – little wonder macro-econometric representations are lacking.

It *is* difficult to provide a convincing case for the defence against Keynes' accusations forty years ago that econometrics is statistical alchemy, since many of his criticisms remain apposite today. The claim to be a science does require the existence of *credible evidence*, namely findings that are acceptable independently of political beliefs or preconceptions about the structural form of the economy. The turbulence of the seventies has greatly facilitated the rejection of 'false' models and, although we are a long way from producing answers, striking progress has been achieved since Keynes wrote, albeit at the cost of making the subject highly technical and increasingly inaccessible to non-specialists. And although econometricians may well tend to look where the light is rather than where the key might be found they are a positive help in trying to dispel the awful public image of economics.

The Paper to which Professor Hendry refers is a Bank of England discussion paper published last month *(Real national saving and its sectoral composition* by C.T. Taylor and A.R. Threadgold), in which the financial surpluses/deficits in the main sectors of the economy are adjusted for inflation. The most important aspect of their calculations are the adjustments for the effect of inflation on the monetary assets and liabilities held by different parts of the economy: the government, companies, private individuals. Such an approach has plenty of support in economic theory, accountancy practice and common sense observation: £500 lent ten years ago is worth much less today; the borrower has made a 'real' capital gain at the expense of the lender – something known to most owner occupiers with a mortgage. The government is a big borrower and the effect of these calculations on its borrowing requirement is shown below. Although the authors urge caution in interpreting the estimates for individual years 'because of problems relating to the timing of capital losses in government stocks', it is clear that between 1975 and 1978 the average government borrowing requirement was around £1½ billion a year in inflation adjusted terms, compared with £8 billion in nominal terms.

The Bank's paper draws attention to three possible implications of their work. First, it suggests that government policy has been much less expansionary over recent years than the nominal government borrowing figures suggest. Rather, as inflation rises and people save more in an attempt to offset its effects, the government's borrowing (which comes from the private sector) is simply an offset for the deflationary effect of the increased propensity to save.

Second, the inflation adjusted borrowing figure is likely to be a much better guide to the financial burden that the government places on the economy. And thirdly, if this, the real financial position of the government were understood, it might make it easier for them to borrow the money they need. At the moment it is widely believed that a high borrowing requirement means that the government is spending beyond its means – which must in due course be inflationary. Such expectations, regardless of their truth, are likely to become self fulfilling if acted upon.

Interestingly, the Bank of England paper ('the views are not necessarily those of the Bank') expresses the view that the 'link between the PSBR and the money supply may be relatively tenuous, at least in the short to medium term, as a recent Treasury paper has suggested.' This is not the government's view.

General government borrowing requirement (GGBR), 1967-78

£ billion	Average 1967-70	Average 1971-74	1975	1976	1977	1978
Nominal GGBR	0.7	3.2	10.0	7.9	4.7	9.0
Percentage of national income at market prices	1.6	5.0	10.7	7.1	3.7	6.3
Less: Notional gain on real value of debt	–1.4	–3.5	–9.0	–6.2	–6.2	–4.6
'Real' GGBR	–0.7	–0.3	1.0	1.7	–1.5	4.4
Percentage of 'real national income at market prices	–1.7	–0.5	1.0	1.5	–1.2	3.1

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SCIENCE
Jonathan Rosenhead

First decade of a radical movement

Science for the people

THIS WEEKEND SEES the tenth anniversary of the rebirth of a British radical science movement. To some, the idea of a libertarian technologist or a militant scientist might seem bizarre. But such individuals and movements have periodically made a signifcant impact both on the left and in political life as a whole. The British Society for Social Responsibility in science (BSSRS), now ten years old, has been the most recent focus for radical initiatives in science and technology.

Such a movement would not have surprised anyone politically active on the left in Britain in the 1930s. The scientific left was then a major component of the left as a whole, and scientists such as J. D. Bernal, J. B. S. Haldane and Hyman Levy held the public ear as well as influential positions within the Communist Party. Their movement was to sink almost without trace but there are lessons to be learnt from both its successes and its failure. Indeed, one speaker at the anniversary meeting of the BSSRS this weekend will be Joseph Needham, perhaps the last surviving prominent member of the thirties' movement.

The thirties' left scientists, with liberal allies, had a number of campaigning successes in battles with government experts. The inadequacy of air raid precautions (shelters, gas masks) were convincingly and publicly demonstrated, and government policy was shame-facedly brought into line. What is more interesting to us nowadays, though, is the nature of their analysis of the role of science in society. Eventually under the influence of Bernal, they came to see science as inherently socially progressive, even as the chief agent of social change. This progressive potential could not, however, be fully realised under capitalism, to the frustration of science and scientist alike. In promoting the fuller development and wider application of science one was simultaneously creating the preconditions for socialism.

After the government saw science triumph in war (radar, the atomic bomb), the conclusion at least of this argument, that the government should promote scientific development, was accepted. History then confounded their analysis. Capitalism proved quite capable of embracing, even cohabiting, with science. With lavish establishment funding available, especially for defence sponsored research, the carefully constructed coalition of marxist and liberal scientists began to crumble. The Lysenko affair, in which the supposedly socialist and pro-science USSR settled scientific arguments by political diktat and executions, completed the demolition job. The liberals were co-opted or shredded away; the hard-core were effectively black-balled out of any influence in scientific circles.

The reconstruction a long term movement was not to happen until the greater social ferment of the 1960's. The reaction against America's war in Vietnam which provided the catalyst. In February 1968 a small group of British scientists organised an international conference on the incipient US use of chemical and biological warfare (CBW) in Vietnam. There were links to the 1930s movement, as the conference was held under the auspices of the Bernal Peace Library. Various British participants soon engaged in an active campaign against CBW in Vietnam, and against CBW research at British universities. Further, some began discussing the need for a permanent organisation which could highlight the issues of society's use of science. Informal meetings were held, growing is size as the word spread. Scientists in their twenties and early thirties predominated.

The launch of the new ponderously named BSSRS, was carefully prepared. Two Nobel laureates, reached through personal contacts, agreed to write a letter to a wide range of key scientists. The result was 33 public supporters for the new society, including 52 professors,

Bertrand Russell (left), one of a wide coalition which founded the movement for social responsibility

44 FRS's, 4 knights, 2 lords and 1 dame.

Among them were philosophers Alfred Ayer and Bertrand Russell, J. D. Bernal, Nobel prizewinners Francis Crick and Lawrence Bragg. The breadth of the trawl now seems remarkable, including Dennis Gabor, Hans Krebs, Sir Michael Swann, and Lord Todd (now President of the Royal Society) — all of whom have proved to hold political positions considerably less than progressive.

This was, in fact, the attempted re-creation by the left of the old liberal-leftist coalition of the thirties. The initial omens looked good. The inaugural meeting in April 1969 (at the Royal Society, of course) was packed, and membership climbed rapidly. Even the Daily Express enthused.

What is curious in retrospect about this whole operation is the extent to which we as scientists were apparently untouched by the anti-authoritarian, anti-expert tendencies by then so prominent in the New Left, the student movement, and in the Womens' Movement. This shows up with particular clarity in the minutes of the informal pre-launch meetings. The most coherently presented position, which commanded nearly universal support, urged that we see ourselves as scientists, with a professional responsibility. We should speak with the authority of science on possible abuses of our discipline. We should avoid the trap of pontificating on specialist topics (science policy, for example) which were outside our limited competence. Our roles as citizens and as scientists should be kept separate, and the former should be no concern of BSSRS. As it turned out, the radical scientists of the seventies proved unwilling to toe this line.

The tensions between the old and new styles of political organising are clearly reflected in two of the earliest and most publicised of BSSRS's activities. The first, within months of the Society's formation, arose from the RUC's massive (and unsuccessful) CS gas assault on Derry's Bogside. CS was clearly on BSSRS's plate, as a result of the earlier campaign on CBW in Vietnam. The Society's response was to send a team of clinicians and scientists to Derry to investigate whether the health of Bogside inhabitants had been injured. Subsequently, BSSRS was to submit expert evidence to the government committee set up to give CS a clean bill of health. This episode is, in its way, a classical example of the traditional 'use-abuse' model of scientific politics. Only experts can play. Science is treated as an essentially pure edifice sadly stained from time to time by abuses which should be cleared away. There is no analysis of how the *content* of science might reflect other social practices, nor consideration of the nature of society at large.

The turning point in BSSRS's rejection of the thirties style of scientific politics was to occur a year later, at the annual meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science (BA). These annual meetings are vast, somnolent affairs, at which stodgy worthies present bland surveys to selfrighteous audiences, while the occasional scientific star flits in and out for a display of technical virtuosity. The 1970 BA meeting was to be in Durham, and more populist elements within BSSRS pushed through (against strong internal opposition) a plan to make a distinctive intervention there. The slogan was to be Science is Not Neutral; the argument was that the impact of vested interests and selective funding on science was so great as to put it on the wrong side in the struggles between bosses and workers, between imperialism and the Third World.

Although moderate and peaceful in form, the effect on the BA was electrifying. Annotated copies of the (reactionary) Presidential address were handed out to the begowned audience entering Durham Cathedral; as they left, a street theatre group acted out the effects of chemical and biological warfare. BSSRS members raised 'political' questions at section meetings on 'technical' subjects, and spent the lunch hour writing, typing and duplicating pamphlets. To the scientific establishment, this was confrontation.

A counter-attack from the scientific 'moderates' failed at the following year's Annual Meeting. After that the advocates of consensus politics began to slip away, taking most of the original establishment sponsors with them. (One exception to this rule is Maurice Wilkins, Nobel laureate for his work on the structure of DNA, who has remained as President throughout BSSRS's ten years.) The moderates regrouped a couple of years later, and formed the elite Council for Science and Society — ironically using a BSSRS study group as their organisational springboard. At last they had a platform from which to make authoritative, apolitical pronouncements about social aspects of science and technology. Sadly, despite copious flows of big foundation funds, they have found almost nothing to say.

THE NEW PERSPECTIVE taken by BSSRS put less emphasis on the 'abuse' of science as an isolated, accidental, and unfortunate phenomenon. There was still a need to campaign on these issues, but it was equally – or more – important to analyse the features of society which operated to produce a stream of 'abuses'. Following up the work on CS gas, BSSRS organised investigations of various

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components of the 'technology of political control'; CR and CS gases, rubber and plastic bullets, interrogation techniques, computers for intelligence collation, and other aspects of a technologically armed state. A pamphlet, and then a full length book* showed how the particular characteristics of such weaponry fit political as well as technological specifications, in societies where government is allegedly by 'consent.'

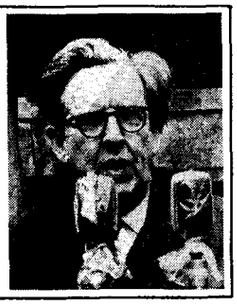
Another example of the changed approach could be seen in the BSSRS response to the Rothschild report on the funding of scientific research. The scientific establishment opposed, unsuccessfully, the proposed 'customer-contractor' relationship as an attack on academic freedom. Rothschild could then pose as a proponent of social responsibility in science. BSSRS proposed an alternative view to Rothschild's state-sponsored 'social responsibility'; the creation of smaller 'community science research councils' where priorities would arise in a different, and to us, more practical and acceptable way.

The rejection of the use-abuse model has led the radical science movement into both theoretical and practical issues. The practical orientation has involved members in struggles where the scientific or technical component could not neatly be distinguished from the political. Besides the issues of civil rights and police brutality raised in the 'Technology of Political Control', a BSSRS 'Agricapital' group focused on issues from selective plant leading to the monopolistic production of non-nutritious bread, in co-operation with bakery workers. The bakers reacted angrily when the publication of the Agricapital report coincided with further industry 'rationalisation' during the recent takeover of Spillers.

The most impressive demonstration of the potential of this practical approach has been the growth of a country-wide network of groups concerned with health hazards at the work-place. The hazards groups have established an information service on chemical and other hazards, regularly used by local trade union groups. The groups also run or contribute to courses on health and safety for shop stewards, publish a bi-monthly *Hazards Bulletin*, and have produced a stream of agitational booklets on particular hazards, the latest (on asbestos) being of book length.

It is reasonable to refer, as I have done in this article, to a radical science *movement*. Many BSSRS activities (for example, its magazine *Science for People*) are run by virtually autonomous groups. In addition, over the years the Society has become a focal point for independent groups which spin-off or gravitate inwards. The Radical Statistics Group is one, which has made an impression in its professional arena; the Politics of Health group is another. One in particular, the collective which produces the *Radical Science Journal*, has concentrated on the development of a theoretical perspective on science. The emphasis has been on the way in which the content (not just the applications) of particular sciences, and of science in general, is imbued with characteristics derived from the society in which it was produced. This is, of course, easier to show in 'softer' subjects like the social sciences. A prime area, which has occupied the attentions of BSSRS working groups as well as less radical critics has been that of 'scientific' theories which purport to justify radical inequality (Jensen, Eysenck), or sexual superiority (Wilson's sociobiology), as 'natural' and genetically inevitable.

The Radical Statistics Group has similarly tackled the apparently 'harder' subject of statistics. Their book, *Demystifying Social Statistics*,† took the subject inside out, from the philosophy of measurement, through the biased mechanics of producing government statistics, to the application of statistical techniques in decision-making. Mystifying approaches like cost benefit analysis claim to provide an objective calculus of social choice but are riddled with imported value judgements. On a grander scale there are exercises like the Club of Rome's *Limits to Growth* study, which achieved massive propaganda for a more repressive world economic order on the basis of crude assumptions and cruder methodology.



J. D. Bernal (right), whose life straddles the entire recent history of radical science

The *ideological* significance of science, and its claimed neutrality, emerge more clearly at this level. For if there is one right answer to social questions, and experts have found it, and if it takes a Ph.D. to understand the method they have used, then there is no room for public participation, and precious little for the political process itself. The advantage for those, interests which control or employ the experts is evident. The Gould Report on marxist infiltration in British universities reserved an especially shrill tone of hysteria for those who suggested that science – even science – might have ideological dimensions.

We are now far from the 1930s scientists' optimistic vision of science as the begetter of progressive social change. But then, the role played by science in the working out of economic and political forces has changed drastically during the last fifty years. From being a marginal cultural pursuit, it has come close to the centre of the political stage. The dependence of capitalism on advanced technology and on science-based innovation has steadily deepened. Genetic engineering can be expected to wipe out traditional industries and replace them with other processes of incalculable risk. Reliance on nuclear energy is already a lever to justify an increase in unaccountable state power. Microprocessor-based applications in office and factory are decimating established occupations and generating a still larger pool of semi-permanent unemployment, while simultaneously adding to the state's control potential. We are witnessing technological developments which will transform our productive base, and also change irrevocably the terrain over which labour must fight its battles with the bosses. The dependence on this is in many ways a desperate enterprise for the capitalist system, now faced with many uncharted economic and political perils. It's very viability is at stake.

In these circumstances it is essential that an adequate critique of science and technology should advocate the left's practice. A healthy radical science movement is, for this reason, a matter of more than parochial concern. The radical science movement is, in fact, entering the 1980s in a healthy state, in terms of both practical and ideological work. New initiatives in the last few months have included, for example, the establishment of a Women's Caucus within BSSRS, the launching of a campaign against a question on racial origin proposed for the 1981 Census, and (most potentially fruitful) moves towards setting up an information service for the trades unions on the impact of microprocessor-based technologies in particular work-places.

Nevertheless, to talk of the health of radical science is, in context, to admire the physical development of a spritely kitten. To meet the needs of the situation, much more in the way of muscle and claw is required. Some of this can come from renewed attempts to penetrate and transform the consciousness of practitioners and students of science and technology. The momentum of capitalist development itself lends a helping hand here. But much is also needed from the ranks of organised labour.

The proposals in the Lucas Aerospace shop stewards alternative Corporate Plan – for the manufacture of socially useful products rather than armament production or redundancy – are the most promising recent initiatives in this area. Workers at all levels in Lucas have planned to use their skills and the company's resources for such alternative ends. This vision of advanced technology unharnessed from production for capitalism and for warfare paradoxically almost returns to the liberatory view of the 1930s, where the social critique of modern science began. But we know now that the prospect of social progress does not come from the internal development of science alone but from an alliance with purposeful political action.

*C. Ackroyd, K. Margolis, J. Rosenhead, and T. Shallice, The Technology of Political Control (Penguin Books 1977).

† Pluto Press, 1979,

Jonathan Rosenhead is a founder member of BSSRS.

The Sayings of Père Patriarche

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POLITICS
Francis Wheen

Heseltine gives councils the straitjacket treatment

The end of local government?

MINISTRY GROUPIES, newspaper people, lobbyists and academics gathered last Friday morning in the almost unbearably restricted space of Room P1/160 of the Department of the Environment. They had come to hear yet another exposition of The New Wisdom, this time in the form of Michael Heseltine's announcement of the Rate Support Grant, and he began with a whopper:

> The last administration has been replaced by one which is prepared to look realistically at the state of the national economy. And it is not prepared to plan expenditure on the basis of fictional assumptions about economic growth.

As David Hendry shows elsewhere in this week's NS, the government's entire economic vision is based on fictional assumptions. But in the light of what Heseltine was about to say, this comment was particularly choice. He went on:

> I recognise that the government is asking a great deal from local authorities. I propose, therefore, to maintain the level of central government assistance unchanged at 61 per cent. This will give a much needed element of stability to the financing of their expenditure.

What is this magical 61 per cent of which Heseltine is so proud? The amount which central government pays towards local government spending through the Rate Support Grant is fixed at a percentage of local authorities' 'relevant expenditure', and for the past three years this share has been 61 per cent. Relevant expenditure consists of local authorities' current expenditure, excepting costs which are already largely met by central government anyway (such as students' mandatory grants, and items which receive specific grants, such as rent rebates), and adding loan charges and revenue-financed capital expenditure.

Figures for the Rate Support Grant settlement are based on current pay and price levels. A year after an RSG settlement, the Secretary of State presents an Increased Order to that grant to help compensate local authorities for pay and price changes during the year. A year later, he produces a smaller, final Increase Order as a contribution towards any further inflation. These orders are based on the same percentage (61 per cent in this case) as the main Rate Support Grant. However, when he announced the original RSG the Minister also specified cash limits for the Increase Orders, to give an indication of what level of increase in costs the government is prepared to finance.

In the steam heat of Room P1/160 last Friday, Michael Heseltine made it clear what that level is: 'It is compatible with year-on-year new pay and price changes affecting local authorities of 13 per cent.' He added that:

> I have set a cash limit for the 1980-81 Increase Order which is realistic and just. It will also be firm. Above this limit there will be no more cash.

Note the unconscious irony in the use of the word 'realistic'. If it were realistic to assume pay and price rises of 13 per cent in the next year, there would be no need for Heseltine to speak threateningly of his 'firmness', since rises of 13 per cent would naturally occur without such growlings. This is why Heseltine's braying about maintaining the 61 per cent is so meaningless: it is hardly helpful of the government to agree to pay local authorities 61 per cent of a certain sum if that sum is calculated on unrealistically low assumptions.

MOST SINISTER OF ALL are Michael Heseltine's plans for succeeding years. It is universally agreed that the present system of local government finance needs to be reformed; but Heseltine's ideas for achieving this, if they are carried out, will cause the destruction of truly local government.

The Rate Support Grant is now assessed in three parts; a 'domestic element' which is a straightforward subsidy to domestic ratepayers; the 'resources element', supposed to compensate for variations in councils' rateable resources; and the largest, the 'needs element'. This is paid according to local authorities' expenditure needs, as assessed through a complicated multiple regression formula which incorporates various social and demographic factors and an area's previous spending pattern. The general criticism of this system has been that it is far too complicated. The Tories' specific objection is that it places too much weight on a council's previous spending when assessing future needs; local authorities, according to Heseltine, are thus encouraged to be profligate.

But how does he intend to change the present system?

> The government proposes to make provision in the forthcoming Local Government, Planning and Land Bill for a new block grant system to come into operation in 1981-82. The system will replace the present needs and resources elements with a single grant payable to all authorities.

What Heseltine wants actually bears no relation to what is normally understood by the phrase 'block grant'. It will be a unitary grant which will give central government much greater control over how local authorities spend their money – and, more importantly for local democracy, how much they can raise in rates. It will work on a simple equation. First, the government will decide local councils' Assessed Spending Need in much greater detail than at present. The regression formula system could still be retained for this purpose, but it is more likely that the government will use what is known as the 'client group' approach: this places much greater emphasis on numbers (of old people, schoolchildren and so on) and much less on the intensity of their needs. It will thus probably favour the counties (where there are more old people) at the expense of the inner cities (where old people, although fewer, tend to have greater problems). This is consistent with the new government's policy of shifting money from the cities to the shires.

The government will then multiply an average rateable value by a Standard Rate Poundage which will be a centrally fixed assessment of how much local authorities should charge in rates. The total will be subtracted from the Assessed Spending Need, and the resulting figure will show how much the government will provide through Rate Support Grant.

Michael Heseltine has frequently said that he wishes to 'penalise the overspenders', and his new system, by giving central government more control over council spending, will fulfil this objective – if one accepts his definition of 'overspenders' as councils which wish to provide a decent level of service for their electorate. A sliding scale will operate: for each percentage point which councils spend over what the minister thinks fit, they will find that they have to raise their rates by rapidly increasing amounts.[1]

Of course the government already sets a suggested figure for local authority spending – the 'relevant expenditure' discussed earlier. But under the present arrangements any council which decides that it wishes to spend more can simply raise its rates by the appropriate amount – and if the local electorate disapprove, they can eject their councillors at the next round of council elections. That is the essence of local democracy as it currently operates; that is what is meant by the autonomy of local government. It is a concept to which Heseltine pays lip service, as in a recent speech to local authority associations:

> We are striving to widen your discretion – to give you greater freedom . . . You are responsible to your electors – you do not need Whitehall to fuss over the details of your work.

It would be interesting to know how he reconciles those words with the announcement he made in Room P1/160 last Friday morning.

[1] The implications of this new method will be more fully understood in a few weeks' time when Tony Travers, of the Centre for Institutional Studies, publishes his detailed critique of the unitary grant system.

Roger Woddis

A Member's prayer

Bless this House, O Lord, we pray,
Keep all evil thoughts away;
Let no accidental spark
Light a scandal in the dark,
Or wild rumour sully me
With the mark of Anthony.
Let a full and frank debate
Seem to set the record straight.

May no commentator claim
Knowledge of the umpteenth name;
Hide the worms of sleeping dogs
Treated with helminthagogues;
Hoe with care, lest seeds of doubt
Turn to poison when they sprout.
Let no vital facts be known
That would implicate the Throne.

Spare the rod, and spoil the spy,
Let it fall on lesser fry;
Save us all from further shocks
Bearing down on Goldilocks;
Let the blind see nothing ill
In the Information Bill.
Leave, when you unearth the mole,
Decent chaps still in control.

We regret that Arthur Marshall's First Person column has been held over from this week's issue.

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LABOUR PARTY
Patrick Wintour

Trade unions set out their terms for the inquiry

Basnett takes the lead

WHILE LEFT AND RIGHT argue over the composition of the Labour Party Inquiry, the trade unionists are quietly getting on with deciding what the Inquiry should look into. As the committee maxim goes, whoever decides the agenda of a meeting determines its outcome. Trade Unionists for a Labour Victory (TULV), under the chairmanship of David Basnett of the General and Municipal Workers' Union, have produced a 'position paper', collated by the GMWU, the Transport and General Workers' Union and the Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staffs. This gives the clearest indication yet of how serious the unions are about the Inquiry and its scope. It calls for submissions from every level of the party and for papers to be commissioned from inside and outside the party – on Labour's class breakdown and membership trends; on the constitution of at least seven European socialist parties; on sources and levels of funds available at a national and local level; on the size and uses of trade union political funds; on union affiliations to the Labour party; on Labour's staffing patterns from 1960 onwards; and on rates of participation in local constituencies.

The TULV suggest a main committee dealing with the most contentious points of the party's constitution, especially the question of 'accountability', and five sub-committees, dealing with membership, organisation during general elections, party organisation, finance and political education. Basnett doubts whether there will be an early interim report on the three big issues discussed at this year's annual party conference (election of party leader, reselection of MPs and who writes the manifesto), because these will have to be considered within the wider framework of the party's constitution. He is chiefly concerned to confront the organisational problems of a working class party whose working class membership is steadily declining.

The Inquiry may yet be chaired by someone from the TULV, but currently the trade unionists are unclear about their role in the proceedings. Will there be a joint union-party inquiry with a joint secretariat, or an internal party inquiry, on which unions are represented? David Basnett stresses his almost paternal concern about the lack of expertise within the Labour Party. His union saw at first hand the financial and managerial mess the party was in during the débâcle over its property company, when it found itself unable to pay for its new headquarters in Walworth Road, and the GMWU property officer had to bale it out. Now the TULV's position paper suggests that the unions should provide the Labour Party with managerial and administrative expertise on a permanent, commercial basis.

Basnett is clearly anxious about the contrast between unions' growing membership and Labour's decline: 'The increasing divorce between the party and working class organisations is worrying. TULV will be looking separately at ways of getting more trade unionists to join the party individually. We must look hard at factory and workplace branches.' Political workplace branches could cut across the constituency structure of the Labour Party if workers do not live and work in the same constituency. Political workplace branches may also undermine the position of union branches.

The TULV appear to favour reorganising the party agents on a regional basis, to stop their present uneven geographical distribution. But finance is at the root of the problem, says Basnett. The unions have already brought forward their affiliation fees to avoid the party falling into an estimated deficit of £1.4 million by 1980. The TULV position paper explains:

> Party finances seem to be dependent on the provision of grants from the trade unions to offset the immediate cash-flow problems. At the same time the unions political funds are reaching the limits of what they can do for the party. There is also the prospect in the long term of state financing for political parties which could mean the ultimate independence of the Labour Party from trade unions. This would be a historic weakening of the union's influence and access to government.

Basnett lists four ways in which the party's finances can be improved: 'By getting more members, by improving fund raising, by getting more unions to affiliate to the Labour Party and by getting more unions to increase the size of their political levy.' The Inquiry will presumably decide to urge unions such as the National and Local Government Officers Association (Britain's fourth largest union) and the National Union of Teachers (the eleventh) to affiliate. Both unions are fighting public expenditure cuts, but are not formally linked to the Labour Party. If unions already affiliated released more of their political funds to Labour on a regular basis, rather than holding back large grants until election time, the money could be spent with more planning on agents and political education.

The fundamental cause of Labour's financial problems has been the failure to increase union levies in line with inflation. The Donovan Commission found that in 1938 adult male manual workers were earning on average £3 9s a week and their average union contribution was £1 16s 7d a year, which amounted to 1.02 per cent of their earnings. By 1966 that figure was down to 0.39 per cent, and by 1977 to 0.32 per cent. It will be a delicate task to hoist union contributions and political levies back to their original level.

Basnett has so far refused to side with left-wing trade unionists in the TGWU and the National Union of Public Employees, or with the standard bearers of the Right in the National Union of Railwaymen and APEX. He has tried to establish a political balance on the trade union side of the Inquiry, but he will soon have to show his hand on basic constitutional issues, where political divisions are most hardened. The way he leans will be critical.

Small

is Stupid

Wilfred Beckerman discusses the harmful influence of the "anti-growth" movement in the first of a series on important pressure groups. He writes of the Club of Rome's supporters: "They could demonstrate their moral fibre, aesthetic sensibilities, and great-hearted concern for the problems of distant generations, even if some of them would not go out of their way to help a blind man cross the road." Later in this same series David Marquand will discuss the Fabian Society, Maurice Peston the Institute of Economic Affairs, and Antony Flew the Campaign for Academic Freedom and Democracy.

Also in The THES this week: A profile of Theodore Roszak. How foreign students are treated in Manchester and in Moscow.
The state of European science.
Harvie Ferguson on Kierkegaard's Journals.

This week

THE TIMES
Higher Education
SUPPLEMENT

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Dr O'Brien and Mr Hyde

> 'Are you a socialist?' asked the African leader.
> I said, yes.
> He looked me in the eye. 'People have been telling me', he said lightly, 'that you are a liberal'.
>
> The statement in its context invited a denial. I said nothing.

So ran the famous opening of O'Brien's introduction, fifteen years ago, to his *Writers and Politics*. In that collection of essays he harshly satirised the cold warriors, teased the *Encounter* set and exposed the neo-colonial racketeering which had just been consummated in the Congo 'peace mission'. Although he spoke of capitalist 'liberalism' as something which made 'the rich world yawn and the poor world sick', he went on to confess that:

> A liberal, incurably, was what I was. Whatever I might argue, I was more profoundly attached to liberal concepts of freedom – freedom of speech and of the press, academic freedom, independent judgement and independent judges – than I was to the idea of a disciplined party mobilising all the forces of society for the creation of a social order guaranteeing more real freedom for all instead of just for a few.

O'Brien partly attributed his liking for this kind of liberalism to the fact that his native Ireland had enjoyed so little of it; the Irish Church being 'with that of Spain. . .the heart of darkness of the ecumenical movement.'

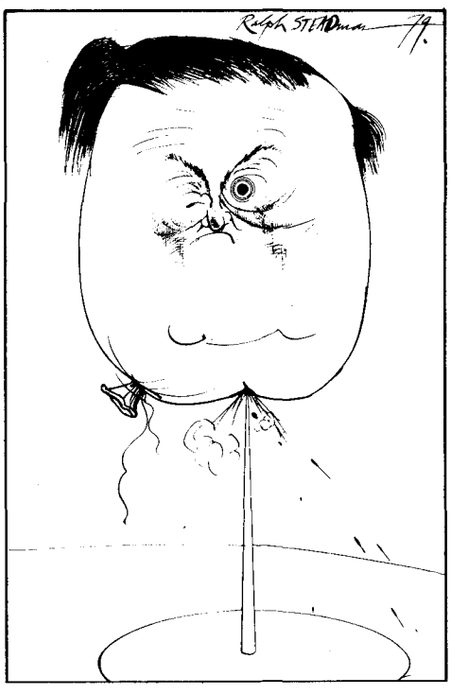
If we take his reservations about revolution, and place them together with his unhappiness about traditional Ireland, then his present political positions seem a little less novel and surprising. At least one other ingredient, however, needs to be added. More, much more than any of our current breed of invertebrate pundits, O'Brien has lived in the world. He not only writes with a greater force and eloquence (not to say elegance) than any of his rivals, but he has also played hard in the roles of academic, diplomat, journalist and politician. He has conducted some of his arguments, not just vicariously in print, but on pavements and in difficult climates. Nor, as the *Encounter* crew found to their cost, does he like to leave a fight half-finished.

Yet readers of his now-regular *Observer* column are treated mainly to the 'Tory growl' which he once claimed to detect in the writing of George Orwell. And those admirers (not a few) who in deference to him had withheld their contributions to *Encounter,* were a little hurt when they saw his 'Liberty and Terror' essay appearing in precisely those compromised pages.

'I AM GRIBOYEDOV', O'Brien exclaimed recently in the course of an emotional discussion. The choice of a fairly obscure Russian writer, veteran of the Decembrist humiliation, who was oddly enough lynched in the Russian embassy in Tehran in 1829, is only slightly suggestive. But it does confirm O'Brien's self-image as the intellectual *engagé*.

And, like most such people, he has 'formative experiences'; episodes which supply an organising principle for experience and reflection. For perhaps a decade, it was the murder of Lumumba and the betrayal of the Congo which supplied this moral and political energy; fuelling the composition of drama and polemic as well as sensitising and preparing him to oppose the horrors that lay ahead in Vietnam and Rhodesia.

Today, that organising principle has changed. The encapsulating struggle is the one against terrorism in Ireland. The experience of serving in government, of being guarded by policemen, of having to help invigilate a population not all of whom are agreed about the IRA, has altered literally *everything*. His attitude even to 'liberal concepts' has undergone a change, as has his view of Marxist intellectuals, disorderly workers, policemen, soldiers, counter-insurgency 'thinkers', *Encounter* and even 'the power of prayer' (admittedly, its power to affect the one praying rather than the outcome). Today the struggle. That is the watchword. It even conditioned his conversation last year with Robert Mugabe, in which he thought he could detect Provisional sympathies in the leader of ZANU and immedi-



ately set about discovering good qualities in Bishop Muzorewa. It took a later interview with Ian Smith to make him recant that bit (though not to admit that from Bulawayo to Belfast there ran no meaningful connecting thread in the first place).

Much of his writing about what might be called 'closet sympathy' with terrorism is timely and rigorous. Many of his distinctions are fair and necessary. But a number of them are not, and the resulting tone of ill-tempered cynicism is disturbing to his old fans and probably much too attractive to his new ones. O'Brien has always been fascinated by Burke, and of late has had increasing resort to him in his articles. Is there, perhaps, a clue here? In his 1968 introduction to Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, he defines three separate Burkean styles. The first is 'what one might call the Whig manner: rational, perspicacious, business-like'. The second 'might be called "Jacobite": both Gothic and pathetic'. The third is 'a peculiar kind of furious irony. Irony is a marked characteristic of Irish writing'.

O'Brien in his Whig or ironic manner is (was?) hard to beat. His study of Camus and the Algerian revolution, though a little unfair to Camus in the light of some recent evidence, is a work of great clarity and erudition. His past lectures to African students and Irish parliamentarians are likewise cool, didactic and efficient, with proper passions under proper control. A good example of this style was his essay in the fiftieth anniversary number of the NEW STATESMAN, in which he played the part of spectre at the feast and wittily bruised some cherished Fabian affectations.

The Jacobite mood is less attractive and less convincing. Here we have O'Brien the stage Irishman; a red-faced gentleman who hates the sight of an empty glass, might be interested in selling you a horse but could equally turn his energy to shutting your head in the door. The weapons here deployed are Gothic and pathetic enough; guilt by association on the one hand and hyperbole on the other.

His article on last winter's industrial turbulence, carrying the minatory title, 'No to a nauseous Marxist-Methodist cocktail', was an example of this genre. 'The refined Marxists', he said, 'are just producing the sheep's clothing for the vulgar wolf.' He accused all 'Marxists' of wanting 'the smashing up of the entire bourgeois system, ethics and all', and of being interested in ideas only as 'some kind of historical cosh or jemmy'. Swipe, crunch; goodbye Gramsci, farewell Hobsbawm and Hill, piss off E. P. Thompson. In a later piece O'Brien rather smugly admitted the charge of 'intemperance', missing the point that what was objectionable was the want of logic and even of Whiggery. As he put it, quoting Burke again, '*Our* being mobbish is the best way of making sure that *they* are reasonable.'

Which might have done as a defence of the pickets. But will it do as a justification for his increasing use of anti-intellectualism? His suggestion, for example, that those who heckled Callaghan about torture in Ulster were merely a 'prong' of the Provos has two defects. It elides the question of whether there *was* torture, and it is guilt by association on a famous scale. Of those who are appalled by the Bennett report findings, how many are 'fellow-travellers'? This reasoning is on a par with his assertion in *Encounter* that 'the man in the street' is more opposed to terrorism than 'the intellectual' with his interest in programmes and ideas. O'Brien has repeatedly used this appeal to intellectual guilt as against demotic common sense; such evidence as we have about Irish public opinion has contradicted him (as he has once or twice admitted in print). So he should beware of what he long ago called 'Paddy Solemn's secret fear'. 'It is that Ireland Will Let Him Down. Of what avail his personal respectability if he is dragged down by a national entity which refuses to be respectable?'

The argument about censorship is carried on by O'Brien through the same prism, and with a similar lack of proportion. In a very recent exchange on control of broadcasting he seemed to have generalised 'the damnable question' of Ireland into a theory of the medium:

> The domain of the anarchic and the arbitrary appears to be extending in society generally. To acquiesce in its extension in broadcasting would

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probably have the effect of accelerating its extension in society.

Try parsing those two sentences politically, taking special note of the 'appears' and the 'probably'. O'Brien was asked how society was to recognise its enemies if they were kept off the screen and the airwaves. 'Well', he replied, 'I think most people have made up their minds that they are opposed to them.' (Which makes the case for prohibition slightly eccentric, as well as highly presumptuous.) But he went on to say, 'If one supports them, that is quite another matter', thus contriving to give the impression that disagreement with him on one point was covert disagreement on the other.

This tendency to absolutism in his recent writing has meant that it is not always a kindness to read an O'Brien column twice. The bluster is all too often evident first time round; the inconsistencies by degrees. Such was the case with his contrast between 'Refined' and 'Vulgar' Marxism, and his unusual comparison of these categories with Titian's 'Sacred and Profane Love'. It is O'Brien, really, who uses the vulgar Marxist method. You may think that you think one thing, but he will show you that 'objectively' you mean another. Here is the 'Jacobite style' at its least sophisticated. 'I will show you who your friends are' is a thought process which makes any bureaucrat or policeman into a dialectical reasoner at one stroke. Burke would not have cared for it. And was Lumumba 'Refined' or 'Vulgar'?

In an interview with a Canadian magazine last year. O'Brien made the preposterous claim that 'I find a fair amount of people on the Left who are still really thinking (that) the use of thermonuclear weapons would be justified as a last resort to end apartheid.' The context makes it clear that there was no 'peculiar kind of furious irony' here intended, whether of Irish or any other provenance. O'Brien, of course, knows nobody who fits that description. But the fact that many on the Left do oppose the use of thermonuclear weapons 'as a last resort' against *anybody* probably strikes him these days as a kind of appeasement. As he puts it, for all the world as if he'd coined the idea, in *Encounter*:

> They (certain 'intellectual' critics) are often accompanied by an attitude of mind which might be identified as unilateral liberalism. This is the kind of liberalism which is sensitive exclusively to threats to liberty seen as emanating from the democratic state itself, and is curiously phlegmatic about threats to liberty from the enemies of that state.

Curiously! The weasel innuendo word *par excellence*. O'Brien can hardly have forgotten the time when he was (falsely) accused by the *Observer* of 'so adamantly keeping silence on Communist excesses (that) he has done himself and his cause disservice'. His retort, that citizens have a primary duty to keep their *own* governments in order, was as valid then as it is now and involved no ambiguity about Russian or any other behaviour.

There was a time when O'Brien scorned Camus for saying that in the case of Algeria 'I believe in justice but I will defend my mother before justice.' 'The defence of his mother', said O'Brien witheringly, 'required support for the French army's pacification of Algeria.' O'Brien's current position, intensely localised in an Irish family position of a rather different kind, requires that everbody must pass a loyalty test before they can criticise the British in Ireland or any other embattled establishment.

Saddest is the fact that, in view of his old and honourable allegiance to 'liberal concepts', O'Brien has found no room in his column for causes even of that kind. Are these, too, tainted by association with leftists and undesirables? (One thinks of the Official Secrets prosecution.) We shall see. His parabola has not yet been completed. He has not quite made his peace with the Congress for Cultural Freedom, or the barking echoes of Thatcherism in the rest of Fleet Street. Jacobite Hyde has not yet driven out Whig Jekyll.

At the close of his study of Burke, O'Brien ventured the following hypothesis:

> One may reasonably conjecture also that the contradictions in Burke's position enrich his eloquence, extend its range, deepen its pathos, heighten its fantasy and make possible its strange appeal to 'men of liberal temper'. On this interpretation, part of the secret of his power to penetrate the processes of the revolution derives from a suppressed sympathy with revolution, combined with an intuitive grasp of the subversive possibilities of *counter*-revolutionary propaganda, as affecting the established order in the land of his birth.

Perhaps this subtle and subterranean process is working itself out within the author of that passage as well as the subject.

Tamworth is certainly a pessimist when he says, in O'Brien's play *Murderous Angels*:

> I think it's clear enough that the man has simply turned back. The left-wingers with him have been doing their best to get him to do just that.

But if only he would. The cause of conservatism has done little or nothing to deserve him.

Christopher Hitchens

Something to get their teeth into!

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Robbed in Europe's supermarket

As the Dublin EEC summit nears, JOHN MILLS examines the huge cost to Britain of the Common Agricultural Policy, and looks for ways of easing the burden.

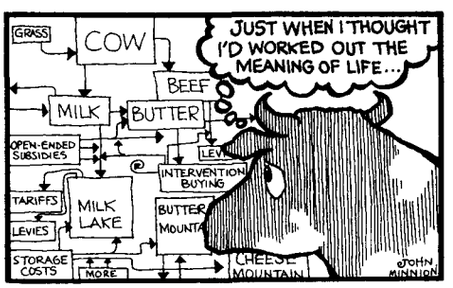
HOW IS IT THAT, while farming production costs are higher in Western Europe than almost anywhere else in the world, the EEC is self-sufficient in nearly all food products and has huge surpluses of most of them? The expense can be explained by the climate and the terrain, by farming methods which use up vast amounts of energy and fertilisers, and by the relatively high cost of labour. The output is possible only because prices within the EEC are maintained at artificially high levels by a complicated system of levies, tariffs and subsidies. The high prices limit the amount of food people can afford to buy and thus create the 'butter mountains', 'wine lakes' and other surpluses we hear so much about. A system of 'intervention buying' then comes into operation, removing excess goods from the market and either storing them, or selling them outside the EEC at much cheaper rates. This is the Common Agricultural Policy – one of the cornerstones of the Common Market and the only real achievement of those who believe in European federalism. Far from stimulating free competition, to which the EEC is supposedly devoted, it is a siege economy, which causes an almost unbelievable waste of resources.

The French started it all in 1955, at the Messina Conference, which preceded the setting up of the Common Market. It was clear by then that German industry was going to dominate continental Europe. It was clear, too, that French food was so expensive that it could not compete with world supplies at much lower prices unless a regime were established which maintained high prices throughout the Common Market and excluded cheaper supplies from elsewhere. The French argued that they would reduce their high import tariffs on industrial goods (to benefit the Germans) only if they were allowed free access to the German market for their agricultural products. The deal – wholly acceptable to the Germans, who were substantial food importers at the time – determined the key characteristics of the CAP. Whatever Article 39 of the Treaty of Rome might say about ensuring food supplies to consumers at reasonable prices, high prices and open-ended subsidies were there from the start. And the cost has been formidable.

Last year, the average EEC farmgate price for butter was 3.8 times the world price, sugar 2.5, wheat 2.0 and oilseeds 1.5. Shop prices are consequently much higher than they need be: meat, for instance, costs the consumer 200 per cent more in the EEC than in North America or Australasia; and cereals cost 100 per cent more. In 1975, the EEC taxpayers spent 48 per cent more on the CAP than they did in the previous year and the cost has risen dramatically ever since: by 28 per cent in 1976, 28 per cent in 1977 and 30 per cent in 1978 – when the taxpayers spent as much as £5,700 million on the CAP.

Ever-growing surpluses are chiefly to blame. In 1978, 20 million more tonnes of cereals were produced than consumed and 3.5 million tonnes of sugar. Production of milk currently exceeds consumption (which is static) by 16 per cent, yet output is expected to go on rising by 3 to 4 per cent per annum. In November 1978 the EEC 'intervention stores' held 505,000 tonnes of butter, 778,000 tonnes of milk powder, 226,000 tonnes of beef, 1,450 million gallons of wine and more than 1.5 million tonnes of cereals. The cost of storing it all came to £800 million, while export subsidies to enable some of it to be sold overseas cost £2,250 million – all on top of the huge cost of buying it in the first place: £2,700 million in 1978. It is not surprising that the CAP now absorbs more than 70 per cent of the entire EEC budget (about £40 a year for every worker in the Community), or that its budget is more than 15 times that of the Social or Regional Funds.

THE DIFFICULTIES OF THE CAP have been greatly accentuated by the collapse of the Bretton Woods fixed currency system, set up after the Second World War to liberalise international trade (and so named after the US conference at which it was agreed). At the end of the 1960s, the Deutsch Mark appreciated heavily against the French Franc, threatening to lower farmgate prices in Germany as a result of cheaper imports, and pushing up the cost of food in France, where



inflation after the upheavals of 1968 was already a serious problem. The EEC then abandoned its objective of a genuinely common price for foodstuffs; each member state instead had different prices for each commodity, with import levies and export subsidies – known as Monetary Compensation Accounts (MCAs) – operating at the frontiers to maintain trade between them. Among other things, this enabled the Germans to keep up their own farmgate prices, in response to the powerful farming lobby in that country. It became exceedingly profitable to drive lorry loads of butter from low to high price countries across badly patrolled borders in the middle of the night. MCAs were introduced as a temporary measure in the late 1960s, but have now become a near-permanent feature of the system.

The main problem in controlling expenditure stems from the Agricultural Unit of Account (AUA) which is used to operate this wholly artificial arrangement. Food prices in each EEC country are calculated from it, but instead of it being based on an average of all EEC currencies, it has stayed linked to the Deutsch Mark. As the French, the Italians, the Irish and the British have been forced by their higher rates of inflation to devalue their currencies against the DM, so the AUA has become progressively higher in value, dragging up the agricultural reference prices for all member states. Average prices for food products throughout the EEC are about 20 per cent higher than they would have been had the AUA been based on all EEC currencies. High prices have encouraged farmers to produce even more and this has led, inevitably, to further vast increases in expenditure. Worse still, the system has become so complicated that scarcely anyone can understand it, and the real beneficiaries can easily obscure how much they are gaining and at whose expense.

HIGHER FOOD PRICES hit the budgets of every household, especially larger families, pensioners and others who spend a large proportion of their incomes on food. Those who benefit most are not peasant farmers – whose real incomes have fallen in recent years – but large-scale farming businesses. Thus the CAP compounds inequality within each member country. At the same time, its effect on third world countries can be devastating: for example, some 25 per cent of the sugar produced in the EEC (at three times the world price) is sold off outside the EEC at give-away prices which have ruined the cane sugar industries in Mauritius and the West Indies. Richer nations have suffered too, as the EEC has taken its toll on Australia's beef industry, North American wheat growers and the dairy farmers of New Zealand. And within the EEC, those countries which already have the highest standards of living – Germany and Denmark – also have the greatest surpluses of food and the CAP enables them to benefit at the expense of the poorer members – such as Italy and Britain, who are also the least self-sufficient in food. This swamps the effects of every other EEC initiative to redress uneven rates of development among member states.

The CAP has caused more trouble for Britain than for any other EEC member. We have the closest relationships with countries outside the Common Market who have been hardest hit by EEC protectionism. We have to import almost half our food, and the transition to high CAP prices from our traditional policy of low-cost food has caused serious inflationary problems. In July 1978, the price of importing raw sugar into Britain from the EEC was 734 per cent of the price we had to pay in 1970; barley was 443 per cent, butter 413, bacon 389, wheat 386, cheese 383 and beef 320 per cent. By comparison, world food prices had risen by only about 250 per cent and the wholesale price of manufactured goods (excluding food, drink and tobacco) had risen to 297 per cent of the 1970 figure. The total budgetary cost to Britain of belonging to the CAP is somewhere in the region of £1,000 million a year and according to the latest Treasury estimate, we spent a further £600 million or so last year on increased food prices. Both these costs are rising rapidly, and directly reduce our living standards.

IN THE RUN-UP to the 1975 Referendum, the more realistic proponents of Britain's

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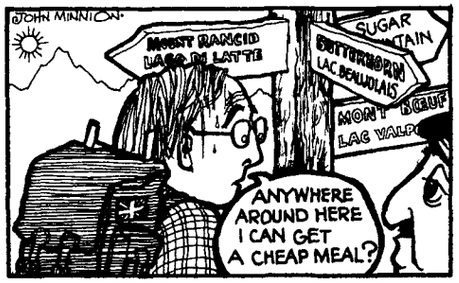

membership of the Common Market were aware that the CAP would cost us money, but expected that it would be offset by a substantial improvement in our trade with the Six. Unfortunately, this never materialised. In 1970, our trade with the Six in manufactured goods (excluding precious stones) showed a small surplus of £347 million; now it runs at an annual deficit which amounts to more than £4,000 million.

It has also been argued that a substantial part of our spending on the CAP is justified on 'social' grounds, because it helps to ease the transition from rural to urban employment, or to retirement. In fact, only five per cent of the CAP budget is 'social' expenditure of this nature; the rest goes on bolstering up prices across the board. And Britain's share of the 'social' allocation is extremely small, since our rural working population is so small: 2.7 per cent compared with 10 per cent in the rest of the EEC.

Another line of defence is that, since Britain cannot feed itself, it will be safer in the Community, which is almost self-sufficient. But the very opposite is true. The way to ensure security of food supplies is to maintain a diversity of sources – for obvious political and geophysical reasons. Of course, a temporary world shortage would push up the price of food, but all the evidence (not least from the CAP) shows that higher prices call forth greater supplies. There would thus be no danger of Britain being unable to buy all the food it needed on world markets – and at prices which averaged out far below those fixed by the CAP. World prices have risen to the CAP level just once – for a few weeks in 1973/4, and then only for grain and sugar. It would be even cheaper for Britain to buy up EEC surpluses as a non-member.

EVERY COW IN THE COMMON MARKET now receives a subsidy of more than £100 a year. Farm Ministers agreed to even higher prices this year – largely thanks to the failure of our own Peter Walker to insist on a price freeze. The total cost of the CAP – which probably rose by at least 15 per cent this year – is stretching the EEC's resources to the limit. What can be done?

It has been argued by a series of Commission working parties, as well as by the Socialist Group in the European Assembly, that farmgate prices ought to be held down, allowing inflation to reduce them in real terms. It has been suggested, too, that more rapid progress might be made if the producers of very high surpluses were made to bear more of the costs directly. This was the idea behind the proposal for a 'co-responsibility levy' on milk, by which funds would be raised from milk producers in all member states and used to help phase out production in areas where costs were high.

However, reforms such as these would be bound to generate enormous transitional problems. First, it is doubtful whether lower prices would reduce production straight away. Prices are so high to begin with that more output would still be worthwhile at much lower prices, and the farming community would be likely to defend its income by increasing, rather than reducing, the amount of food it produced. As long as intervention buying continued, the butter mountains and wine lakes would grow. Second, the policy would certainly increase unemployment, adding to the millions already on the dole in the Common Market. Third, partial reform of the CAP would serve the interests of some member states less than others. As long as the MCAs and the Green currency system remained, countries like Britain, even though their farming costs are relatively low, would be squeezed more sharply than those with high cost farms such as Germany and France. Considerable progress has been made in closing the gap between the Green and the real rates of currency, but they could well diverge again. And proposals such as the milk co-responsibility levy are not devoid of problems. For example, while Britain might gain in the long term from a complete reform of the CAP dairy product regime (including abolition of the MCAs and the DM-linked Green currency), the immediate costs of a co-responsibility levy would far outweigh the benefits to British agriculture. As a relatively efficient producer, Britain would be paying the levy but getting next to nothing out of it. All EEC countries except Britain and Italy are net gainers from the CAP. They are unlikely to forgo their present advantages without extracting major concessions in return, and these could carry new costs and disadvantages.

A formidable bulwark against reform is posed by the many powerful, well-organised groups which have a vested interest in the status quo, whatever its cost. The high prices created by the CAP have made fortunes not only for farmers, but also for farm machinery and fertiliser manufacturers, for land agents and lawyers, and indeed for almost everyone else concerned with the long chain of food production, processing and distribution: all have good reasons for defending the status quo.

High subsidies are more acceptable on the continent than in Britain because of the different nature of the agricultural community there: a far greater proportion of the labour force is employed on the land and city dwellers tend to have closer links with agriculture, because of the later transition from country to town. The average size of farms, particularly in Germany, is much smaller than in Britain, and many are run on a part-time basis, providing a substantial group of people who are not actually working on the land most of the time, but who have a strong interest in farming matters. The agricultural vote is crucially important in a number of countries where proportional representation makes voters much more footloose than in Britain. In Germany, the Free Democratic Party, which is heavily dependent on agricultural votes, tends to hold the balance between the Socialists and Christian Democrats. As a result, the FDP's Herr Ertl, the most ardent of all proponents of high CAP spending, is permanently ensconced as Germany's Agriculture Minister.

THE ONLY HOPE of breaking the deadlock lies in the near-certainty that the rising cost of the CAP will precipitate a major crisis in the EEC's finances. Funds authorised for total EEC expenditure (of which more than 70 per cent goes on the CAP) consist of import levies on food and manufactured goods, plus a one per cent sales tax collected through the VAT system. By 1981, on present trends, even this huge sum won't cover the costs of the CAP, and a fierce battle is bound to be fought over whether the EEC budget should be increased. It is difficult to see how Italy and Britain, who have the least to gain, can reasonably be expected to agree. The pressures on them to do so will be enormous, but this may prompt an even greater crisis, with Britain deciding to opt out of the CAP altogether.

If we did leave, it would cause a major upheaval, because the CAP would lose its principal paymaster and its biggest outlet (by far) for surplus agricultural produce. But it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that we could use the threat of withdrawal to force a reform which would be far more effective than any attempt to hold down prices: to oblige member states who want high food prices to meet the costs themselves. If Germany then continued to insist on paying its farmers absurdly high sums, it would be free to do so, but at its own expense. Italy would probably support such a move – as would the next wave of EEC entrants (Greece, Portugal and Spain), who are liable to be in similar trouble with the CAP. Even the French, who are staunch supporters of the CAP, are baulking at the high cost of supporting Germany's extravagant dairy production. But the Germans would undoubtedly resist reform, and they would find allies. After all, it would call into question the whole purpose of the CAP.

Next week, Margaret Thatcher will attend the EEC summit in Dublin, where Britain's contribution to the CAP will be high on the agenda. She may be pondering – with good reason – whether it will ever be possible to get any major changes without Britain taking unilateral action.

The Sayings of Père Patriarche

"Variability in the weather may add spice to life; in wine such spice is to be avoided."

PÈRE PATRIARCHE
RED & WHITE VIN DE TABLE
BOTTLED IN FRANCE BY PATRIARCHE
For once, don't worry about the wine.

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LETTERS to the EDITOR

Power of attorney

From Lord Shawcross

I read with concern your letter by Professor John Griffith in the issue of 19 October headed 'The Unaccountable Prosecutor'.

As a one-time holder of the office of Attorney-General, I was very concerned with it. It seems to me, however, that Professor Griffith has got the position quite wrong. There is no doubt that the Director of Public Prosecutions acts under the general superintendence of the Attorney-General, that the Attorney-General is entitled to give him directions as he sees fit in any particular case and, of course, that the Attorney is answerable to Parliament for the actions of the Director. It is most important that these fundamental rules should be maintained. I have no reason to doubt that they will be.

House of Lords

Scandal of St Matthew's

From John Heddle MP

Your article 'The Scandal of St Matthew's' (NS 2 November) contained many statements about the St Matthew's Psychiatric Hospital in Burntwood, which is in my constituency, which are open to question and cross-examination and I will return to these at a later date.

Meanwhile, may I through the courtesy of your columns ask your readers to accept that those who chose to leak the report to you have caused untold heartache to the Hospital's dedicated staff and unnecessary concern and suffering to the relatives of the patients at present in the Hospital. Those responsible for the leak will I hope be asked to explain the purpose of their actions in due course.

Perhaps at this stage I may simply nail the lie to one particular statement contained in your article. You stated 'Paraldehyde, a drug banned in other psychiatric hospitals for some years because it is so dangerous . . .' but I have to tell you that the Minister of Health in reply to my Parliamentary Question 'Whether paraldehyde has been banned from use in psychiatric hospitals generally' replied on 12 November thus: 'This drug has not been banned'.

I wonder if you check facts before publishing confidential information that has been leaked to you.

House of Commons

My fair Higgins

From Sandy Wilson

Benedict Nightingale (along with one or two other critics) is quite mistaken in blaming Loewe and Lerner for the 'happy' ending of *My Fair Lady*. It was in fact written by Shaw himself for the 1938 film version of *Pygmalion* (as was the scene of the Embassy Ball). Since Higgins was played by the beguiling Leslie Howard, the return of Eliza (Wendy Hiller) seemed only natural.

2 Southwell Gardens, London SW7

Labour and farmers

From Joan Maynard MP

It was with some amazement that I read Ian Carter's statement (NS 2 November) that agriculture is completely ignored by the Labour Party.

While it is true that agriculture is not given the prominence in the Labour Party that some, including myself, believe it deserves, it is, nevertheless, dealt with in a manner befitting the importance of the industry to the nation. It should not be forgotten that it was the Labour Party that was responsible for the 1947 Agriculture Act — an Act that laid the basis for the successful post-war development of agriculture and is widely regarded as one of the most important pieces of agricultural legislation ever passed in this country — and the 1976 Rent (Agriculture) Act – which put an end to some of the iniquities of the Tied Cottage system.

In the last few years alone the Party has produced a wide range of documents on the subject, ranging from proposals on the public ownership of land and evidence to the Northfield Enquiry, to the review of the White Paper 'Food from our own Resources', to suggestions for the development of fish farming. Statements have been issued about the cruelty inflicted on animals in agriculture and the problems of the green pound. Labour's Programme 1976 contained a lengthy section on Food, Agriculture and Fisheries. Currently the Party is working on a lengthy statement on the problems of rural areas (an interim statement was issued on the subject in March). Nor should it be forgotten that it is the Labour Party that has been instrumental in bringing out into the open the absurdities and iniquities of the Common Agricultural Policy.

House of Commons

From Anthony Barbour

Barry Wilson must think that no farmer ever reads the NEW STATESMAN or, if so, cannot ever read several issues in succession.

A few weeks ago his target was the UK milk industry which was described as standing in the way of letting in what he assured us was cheaper milk from France which would compete with our own on supermarket shelves.

Now it is the UK sheep farmers who are at fault. They have committed the sin of producing lamb both efficiently and in quantity and should therefore be denied the opportunity of exporting to France as it would be unfair to struggling French producers.

Perhaps Mr Wilson could now be persuaded to give us another example of the consistency of his views by discussing the unrestricted import of French apples to this country in terms of the disadvantaged home producer? Or is any old argument good enough on behalf of the consumer so long as it comes between the farmer and his getting a decent return for his efforts?

Coomb Dale, Bickerton, Malpas, Cheshire.

Caring for the old

From Mandy Merck

While I also object to the 'Dumping' of the old in the institutions of Kathleen Gibberd's article (NS 9 November) I am infuriated by her solution. Socialised care for the old should indeed not mean the ghettoisation of individuals by age – any more than NHS facilities should be centralised into the distant mega-hospitals of current trend. But neither should the dismantling of our public services be furthered by exploitation masked as 'community care'.

If Kathleen Gibberd had looked further into the Kent Community Research Project (cf. Beatrix Campbell's piece in the 21 September *Time Out*), she would have discovered that the approximately 60 'helpers' paid 'modest fees' are *all* women. As Kent Social Services chief Nicholas Stacey put it:

> You pay a neighbour £15 a week and get £50 service . . . When you've got male unemployment, how much better that women, who more naturally incline to a community-based life, do this sort of thing.

With rising unemployment and declining childcare provisions (and thoughtful little incentives like Kent's £15 a week to enable a daughter to look after her aging parents), is it any wonder 'there is no shortage', to quote Gibberd, 'of helper applicants'?

With friends like the Kent Social Services and the NEW STATESMAN, who needs Patrick Jenkin?

Time Out, Southampton Street, London WC2

Christmas under apartheid

From Abdul Minty, Anti-Apartheid Movement

Many of your readers may recall that in April this year a young South African, Solomon Mahlangu, was executed in Pretoria despite unprecedented international appeals. This Christmas the Mahlangu family and thousands of other families in South Africa will be remembering their relatives who have died or who are imprisoned for their political beliefs.

May we once again invite your readers to send greetings for Christmas and the New Year to the families of political prisoners, detainees, the banned and the banished in South Africa, Namibia and Rhodesia. Such greetings are seen as an expression of support and concern, and are deeply appreciated by the recipients.

Lists of the above are available on request from the Anti-Apartheid Movement, 89 Charlotte Street, London W1P 2DQ.

The gardening vicar

From Alan Cock

Much as I enjoyed Arthur Marshall's musings (NS 19 October) on the variety of apple called 'Rev. W. Wilks', I must enter a *caveat*. The picture he conjured up for us of Wilks the man as a pallid, meek and rather ineffectual parson, tearing himself away from ecclesiastical duties for rare and brief spells of pottering in the orchard, is both engaging and wholly plausible. Nevertheless, it is wholly false, even as to trivial physical details: Wilks's complexion was rosy, not pallid.

Wilks has an important niche in the history of horticulture. For a long and critical period (1888-1920) he held the key position of Secretary of the Royal Horticultural Society, where he did a great deal to encourage the trend for horticulture to become more scientific, and less a matter of tradition, guesswork and 'dabbling'. One of his brainchildren was the series of International Conferences on Hybridisation and Plant Breeding, started in 1898. It was at the third of these (London, 1906) that William Bateson gave the first public airing to the term he had coined for the scientific study of heredity and variation: genetics. Wilks, as editor of the published proceedings, seized the opportunity to change the title in a way that expressed the scientific bias and broader scope of the meeting: they appeared as 'Report on the 3rd International Conference on Genetics'. Arthur Marshall, if he is curious, can find Wilks' portrait in this Report – bewigged, rather corpulent, and with a distinctly 18th century air about him.

Wilks was indeed a vicar – of Shirley in Surrey. But his work at the RHS (salaried to the tune of £250 p.a. from 1892) must have been virtually a full-time occupation – certainly not to be executed by 'snatching a precious moment or two away from font and pulpit'. So I suspect that he delegated most of his parochial duties to a curate. During his term of office the RHS progressed from indebtedness to prosperity, increased its membership 15-fold, and opened and developed its famous gardens at Wisley – all of which speak of Wilks' abilities as an administrator and man of affairs. He does have another memorial in the vegetable world, perhaps more apposite than the apple: the famous Shirley poppy, which Wilks developed and named after his parish. Surely the Shirley poppy occupies a corner somewhere in the garden of Myrtlebank?

Department of Biology, University of Southampton

Levin's heroes

From William Pike

Bernard Levin (NS 9 November) claims to have discovered 'visible signs of an exceptional serenity' on the faces of the visitors to the Festival of Mind and Body at Olympia. I was one of those visitors. I failed to detect such serenity but I did spot visible signs of an exceptional alarm: another visitor, having listened to a short lecture on the delights of nasal irrigation, panicked badly when the shaven-headed lecturer seized him by the wrist and attempted to thrust a curious plastic syringe into one of his nostrils. He escaped without injury.

180a Westbourne Grove, London W11

Correction

Andrew Arden has asked us to correct an error which emerged in the process of editing his article last week ('Hash eviction law smuggled in ', NS 16 November). Landlords can *not* get an eviction order automatically if they want to live in the premises themselves, unless they are returning owner-occupiers who have lived there before.

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Cotswold Diary

☐ When I was asked to write the Diary for this week, I protested that I'd been away for a month, that nothing of any significance had happened to me, that I had no idea what had been happening to anyone else, and that my information on world affairs, let alone on Cotswold gossip, was nil. Write it, they said.

So. I haven't met anyone who knew Philby, Burgess, Maclean or Anthony Blunt, even as children. I haven't attended any parties, demonstrations, or meetings of the Women's Institute. The only attention I have given to Kampuchea is to sponsor a six-year-old to walk four times around his village in aid of it, which he thinks is a bit daft. I wasn't here for Guy Fawkes Night, Harvest Festival, or even the Jumble Sale. I spent a week in hospital with a kind of howdah over my right foot, in a cheerful little cupboard of a room overlooking the Lisson Grove Labour Exchange, which was handy for visitors who drew their dole there but told me very little about the horrors of unemployment under a Conservative Government. I then spent ten days in Oxfordshire, foot propped up like an old man with gout, only looking up from the typewriter to watch a mare and her foal cavorting round a square, flat field, which didn't seem to bore them. From there I moved to the salubrious heights of Willesden, and a family wedding; then five days in Kensal Rise, which may be a great place to live if you happen to live there. I was taken to Wisley Garden, which I found rather dank, and to Messrs Whitbread in the City, where they kindly gave me a pretty little silver dish and a larger and even prettier cheque to go with it. I suppose this might count as an event of national interest, since I actually saw Robert Robinson in the flesh (he said, and I quote, 'Congratulations.'). I then came home, stopping in Oxfordshire to pick up my typewriter and do twelve hours work on the way. That, apart from the fact that I must have read at least 500,000 words and written or rewritten what feel like as many, has been my month.

☐ Arrived home, my priority was to get to the local newsagent and order *The Times*. There are no political implications in this. I'm just sick of a newspaper that reserves five pages a week for a peculiar sect called 'Guardian Women': the relief, on 13 November, of feeling that one could potter through Levin and the excavation of Saxon churches without wearing a womb around one's neck. I also wanted a rest from the ever-expanding *Observer*, which now segregates Living, implying that news, arts, business, sport and £8,000 Cadillacs are for terminal cases only. All I want to know is where I can find the Gardening column once a week, (and on Saturdays I have the lot, anyway, including the pink one – my loyalty to Christopher Lloyd is unshakeable, even if he does appear under Leisure): Otherwise, I'm perfectly happy to work through a newspaper from Home News to Wills, and whether I'm a woman, a stockbroker or a Chinese Seventh Day Adventist is none of their business.

☐ Anyway: my newsagent is a tired grandmother whose shop always seems to be full of elderly wives paying their bills in very small coinage. Because I wasn't buying anything, I eased myself apologetically to the counter and asked if I could please switch to *The Times*. The reaction was horrifying. The exhausted newsagent looked as though I'd just told her some terrible news that she had been dreading for years.

'I'm very apprehensive about the *Sunday Times*,' she said. In the circumstances, the word 'apprehensive' seemed to have huge significance.

'Why?' I asked, trying to sound gentle and unshockable.

'I don't know. I'm very apprehensive.'

'You mean there's some . . . problem? You think you may not get it?'

'No. Oh, no.' She shook her head violently. 'I'm just – ', she glanced at the woolly-gloved fingers still scrabbling for ½ps; she seemed trapped, terrified, as though William Rees-Mogg and Harold Evans were hiding under the counter, ready to blast her to pieces with high-explosive Smarties. 'I'm just *very apprehensive* about the *Sunday Times*.'

I still wonder what she was trying to tell me. Maybe there's a posse of Iranian revolutionaries hiding out in the Cotswolds, ready to strike down anyone who sells Frank Giles' interview with the Shah.

☐ My prejudice against Chipping Campden is probably even more illogical than my distaste for Kensal Rise: unrelieved beauty or ugliness is nearly always a bore. Campden is one of those villages where every door-knocker gleams, every house and cottage is listed, every garden purrs under the attention of men and boys (if a garden can't purr, I'm sorry. To me, they purr.). I was therefore delighted and amazed to hear that 'Campden Wags' – we still have 'wags' in the Cotswolds – had recently festooned the village with chamber pots, built a privy out of cardboard and dumped it in the High Street, and circulated ribald broadsheet verses celebrating these acts of vandalism.

It's all something to do with the fact that the Department of Environment has given some money to the District Council, which has given some money to the local council, for the purpose of repairing the pavement and doing away with an unsightly car-park. The materials for repairing the paving (surely not *new* paving?) didn't arrive, so the workmen started digging up the car-park first. At this point, the traders in Lower High Street realised they would be losing a lot of business, and demanded that at least part of the car-park be kept. The town council held a fiery meeting in which the Mayor said the whole thing was most unexpected, the Chamber of Trade demanded a public explanation of what was going on, the deputy county surveyor of Gloucestershire said that it was all having a bad effect on the morals of the workmen, particularly since the county's warning lamps kept getting nicked, and Mr Seamus Stewart, the local bookseller, said there was a shortfall of £15,000 on the pavement scheme anyway, so what were they doing wasting money on 'nothing more than a cosmetic exercise?' As is usual in such affairs, it was decided to call a working party meeting, which would decide when to hold a public meeting, which would – eventually – decide what course to take.

☐ I couldn't quite see which side the chamber pots were on, but the story was irresistible; also, I love to find new bookshops. On Saturday there was an icy drizzle and, being lunchtime, all the 'traders' were firmly shut. A bus-load of hikers were wandering about, vainly trying looked doors in the hope of buying a local art, craft, or packet of crisps. I took my bearings from the five yards of dug-up car park and found Mr Stewart's shop. 'Closed for luncheon', the notice said: Librairie fermée – réouverture à 14 hrs: Libreria chiusa durante la colazione: Siop Ilyfrau ar gau am génio: 'Gam dhinneir/Awa tae my denner: Vipote Bibliophila Necesse Coenare Habet Librarium . . .'

At that point Mr Stewart opened the door, and seemed not at all surprised to find me scribbling in a notebook. I may not have copied his Welsh and Gaelic correctly, in which case I apologise; the information was also conveyed in Hebrew, German, Arabic, Dutch and Japanese, though not, he said regretfully, in Esperanto.

I had read in the local paper that Mr Stewart is 'the erstwhile "Brain of Britain" ' and should have remembered, but 'erstwhile' is something I don't come across much and I thought I was primarily there to ask him about the chamber pots. He was much more interested in telling me how the ancient Persians (I think) called out 'Thalassa' when they caught sight of the sea, and how if he had his way, the grass verges of Chipping Campden (but not, of course, the car-park) should be left to grow wild, providing they grew oxlips and eglantine rather than docks and nettles. I thought this a very promising idea, and agreed that Epsom Salts were just about as far as you could go if you were really into organic gardening. He fetched his NEW STATESMAN clippings, being an erstwhile Competition winner, and I eventually left with a load of books, none of which cost more than 45p except for his own, *Book Collecting* (David & Charles, £6.50 + 10p signing charge, which goes to cover research). Useless as a reporter I realised that I was no wiser about who had hung out the chamber pots or why; but discovering Seamus Stewart did a lot to reconcile me to Chipping Campden.

On the way back to the car, I read a notice pinned up in the newsagent's window: 'Black Waitress Dress and Hat. Worn Twice. 36 Bust. £5'. Repatriated, I suppose. Nice girl, of course, but a bit out of place in Chipping Campden.

Penelope Mortimer

This England

Prizes: £3 book token for first entry, £2 tokens for others printed. Paste entries on a postcard.

☐ He said it was impossible for the company to cut back. He added: 'Other industries can cut back on overtime or manpower, but we can't have fewer swans or fairies in a ballet.' – *Daily Telegraph* (Jan Harris)

☐ After protests, the judge added: 'There are some sections of the community where beatings of one's wife is not the same as others. I mean that behaviour in Belgrave Square is not the same as behaviour in Bermondsey.' – *Guardian* (Shalini Waran)

☐ Mr Crome finished in fifth place behind the Liberal and National Front candidates. He stood at the general election to discover if God wanted an Independent Christian MP. – *Harrow Observer* (Nicolas Walter)

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

Bruce Page

The Pornography of Power

The White House Years, 1968-1972 by HENRY KISSINGER *Michael Joseph/Weidenfeld* £14.95

DURING THE MIDDLE SIXTIES at Harvard University, Government Course 180, *The Principles of International Relations*, was taught by Professor Henry Kissinger. He had made his name as a student of 19th-century diplomatic history, and added to it with studies of nuclear weaponry: although there was nothing to foreshadow his present-day eminence, he had some extra-academic standing as an adviser to the Rockefellers, and to the Kennedy and Johnson administrations.

Kissinger's discourse made a powerful impact upon some of his students. It began, as one of them recalls, from the notion that nuclear armouries made it difficult for Great Powers to graduate military threats in the way that they once supposedly did. Once, it had been possible for a Bismarck to notch up tension in Europe's chancelleries – gaining his way thereby – through issuing commands for mobilisation. But how to do this with nuclear missiles permanently mobilised, just a button-push away from 'mutual assured destruction'?

Such a situation, according to Kissinger, placed a 'significant premium' upon irrationality. The line of argument, says his ex-student, ran like this:

> There is a clear element of power over your opponents if they can be persuaded to believe that excess zeal on your part might touch off nuclear war.
>
> This particular lecture made one of the clearest impressions of my Harvard years. It is trenchant stuff: but fraught with a veritable hall of mirrors of treble ... quadruple ... multiple think. And underlying it the sombre, but then unstated, requirement to acquire a record of irrational deeds.

Also, this student recalls Dr Kissinger saying, in so many words, that the requirement of irrationality was 'unfortunately ... at odds with the democratic political system'. (True enough: Barry Goldwater's Presidential candidacy had just been wiped out because he was considered irrational on the question of nuclear warfare.) Therefore, Kissinger thought, totalitarian regimes had a powerful advantage in world affairs.

Practical people commonly assume that nonsense talked by academics and intellectuals has little impact upon the real world. But this case, at least, is not so simple. A few years later, at the outset of his star-crossed Presidency, Richard Nixon privately explained his conception of international relations to the White House adviser H. R. (Bob) Haldeman. The story is told by William Shawcross in his book *Sideshow* (much anathematised by Dr Kissinger), and it is worth mentioning that it refers to a period when most respectable opinion portrayed the Nixon White House as a citadel of modest, conservative calm.

> He said, 'I call it the Madman Theory, Bob. I want the North Vietnamese to believe I've reached the point where I might do *anything* to stop the war. We'll just slip the word to them that "for God's sake, you know Nixon is obsessed about Communism. We can't restrain him when he's angry – and he has his finger on the nuclear button" – and Ho Chi Minh himself will be in Paris in two days begging for peace.'[1]

Where, and how, could Nixon have acquired such an idea? And once acquired, how sustained?

THE QUESTION STARES at us across a decade, and across several million corpses. For whatever the Seventies brought to Indochina, it was not peace. There had, of course, been great suffering there during the Sixties, and it was too much to hope it might end easily with the decade. But scarcely anyone can have imagined the Sixties as merely an overture to impending nightmares: an intensified war fought (despite the distribution of Nobel Peace Prizes) to its bitter conclusion; aerial bombardment like none seen before; famine; fresh wars (China versus Vietnam, Vietnam versus Cambodia); the expulsion of the Boat People; the ascendancy (still legally recognised by our country) of Pol Pot and his lethal automatons.

On one account, this catastrophe was due to a gigantic misuse of the power of America, still by vast margins the world's most richly-endowed nation. Shawcross's *Sideshow* is a chief document of any such indictment. On another, it was due precisely to an *insufficient* deployment of American power: that Indochina's misfortunes (mirrored elsewhere in the world) begin with the ambitions of totalitarian communism, and that the Western military resistance which is alone capable of checking those ambitions is systematically undermined by liberal guilt and by socialist collaboration. Dr Kissinger's huge memoir is largely devoted to upholding this view: he claims that the architecture of his Indochina peace would have held, had not the US Congress foolishly stripped the Presidency of its ability to deploy air power and military assistance. Thus, the monstrous determination of the totalitarians prevailed. One cannot, he says, blame the nature of a regime upon those who, like himself, tried to resist it but were betrayed. He has the support of, among others, the *Wall Street Journal* and the *Economist* in drawing from this geopolitical conclusions extending far beyond Indochina: if such betrayals are not corrected in future, then our civilisation is doomed.

It is not so hard to show that Kissinger's account of American involvement in South-east Asia is a web of untruths – to an extent which makes *The White House Years* implausible as a witness to anything. It is less easy to understand why this should be so, to explain why a man of Kissinger's gifts feels he can proffer a view of the world which – for all its dress of sophistication – would be too crude for a schoolchild equipped with any decent sense of curiosity. A notable example occurs at p. 518:

> It was Hanoi – animated by an insatiable drive to dominate Indochina – that ... organised the Khmer Rouge long before *any* American bombs fell on Cambodian soil.

No. Anyone investigating the plausible-enough idea of a Vietnamese desire to colonise Cambodia discovers early on that the North Vietnamese maintained for many years their own cadres of Khmer communists. These were kept leashed in Hanoi during the long time that the North Vietnamese considered the 'neutralist' Cambodian regime of Prince Sihanouk to be a better option for them than a loyal, but dependent satellite. The Khmer Rouge, originally a fraction devoted to Sihanouk's overthrow, loathed Hanoi precisely because it offered no help against the Prince. After Sihanouk was replaced by the American client Lon Nol, the Vietnamese tried to take over (or supplant) the Khmer Rouge *maquis* by sending their own long-domesticated Cambodians down the Ho Chi Minh trail. Pol Pot's men slaughtered them. If the Khmer Rouge are seriously beholden to anybody, it is to the Chinese – whose Asian ambitions are scarcely smaller than Vietnam's,[2] but who appear in Kissinger's account as co-conspirators with himself for peace.

Naturally, this interesting, if wretched reality must be collapsed in order to allow Kissinger to draw a straight, clear line of blame. Before going further into the structure of such boldly-made but feebly-based contentions, it helps to look at the nature of Kissinger's book, and the nature of his claim to rule.

VERY SPACIOUS CLAIMS are made for *The White House Years*. The *Sunday Times*, which is serialising it at length, celebrates its 'style' and 'richness'. 'A stunning book,' says Thomas Bray of the *Wall Street Journal*, '... a major inquiry into the nature and art of statecraft ... gem-like profiles of foreign leaders ... Mr Kissinger's account of his secret trip to China shines.' Even a hostile critic like Stanley Hoffman in *The New York Review of Books* finds it intellectually impressive, and says that Kissinger, if not otherwise engaged, might have made a novelist of quality. Nonetheless, Hoffman reflects, there is something 'airless and oppressive' about the volume.

This does not go nearly far enough. Not only is the book, as a literary artefact, gruesomely bad: its badness is connected with its true nature as a work of propaganda, and connected somewhat with the undue deference which Kissinger continues to be paid. To begin quietly, here is a well-praised example of one of Kissinger's gems of portraiture (the subject being Edward Heath):

> He was not free of the complexes imposed by Britain's class history ... The ruthlessness necessary to achieve his ambition did not come naturally and was all the more noticeable for that reason ... He was a warm and gentle person who anticipated rejection and fended it off with a formal politeness (punctuated often with a laugh distinguished by its lack of mirth).

The result (surely leaving Tolstoy secure upon his pedestal) would be acceptable enough in a provincial newspaper obituary: it is supposed, however, to be one of the plums in Kissinger's

1. *Sideshow* (André Deutsch), serialised NS 15, 22, 29 June. Shawcross cites Haldeman and Di Mona, *The Ends of Power*, p 83.
2. See Anthony Barnett, NS 23 February 1979.

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enormous duff. It is surely unusual to read 1,500 pages of recollections by a professional intellectual, and find them practically devoid of general cultural references: those that occur being apt to clang appallingly. During his 'shining' account of the Chinese expedition, Kissinger tells Chou En-Lai that some of his experiences make him feel like

> the plumber in Kafka's novel *The Castle*, who, having been summoned and then denied entrance, spent his life trying to get in . . .

Given the fate of the Nixon Administration, the substitution of 'plumber' may just be a hilarious Freudianism: but it's hard to believe that anyone who has really encountered that unbearable book could forget that 'K', the protagonist in *The Castle*, is a land-surveyor, for K's profession is woven into the tale almost as firmly as Shylock's into *The Merchant of Venice*.

An intellectual might be defined, negatively, as someone who tries not to mangle literature. Naturally, you can be a perfectly good cook, Polar navigator or surgeon without claiming intellectual virtues. But you may not be invited to Harvard to preach the Madman Theory of War, nor appointed in Washington to practise it.

Elsewhere, our cultivated statesman fondly re-invents the literary wheel. Reflecting that it's tough at the geopolitical top, he says:

> I read a novel once, based on the proposition that each human being has a finite amount of qualities like courage, and endurance and wisdom, and that life consists of expending these ever-dwindling resources.

This surely is not the only theme of literature but it's about the hardest to overlook: being established in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, elaborated in the tale of Beowulf's final monster, and carried no doubt into the epics of cultures other than our own. The fact that in each individual case the contest between *virtu* and *fortuna* has just one result was pointed out to Roland before Roncesvalles, noted by Cassius of Portia's suicide, and defied by the horn outside the Dark Tower. Sweeney among the nightingales: all this comes down to something Kissinger picked up somewhere? (In a *Reader's Digest* version of *The Red Badge of Courage*?) The reader will not by now be amazed to learn that Cambodia's fate unfolds with (yes) 'all the inevitability of a Greek tragedy': script by Henry Kissinger and Richard Nixon, based on an idea by Euripides.

Literature aside, one is surprised, not so much that a Professor of Government (and world statesman) should express total ignorance of economics, as by the aggressive incuriosity of Kissinger's approach to the subject. Much space is consumed in denouncing the 'moralistic' foreign-policy tradition of pre-Nixonian Washington, and its supposedly lamentable effect upon America's international potency. The idea that this falling-off might have something to do with the collapse of the dollar (due in good part to costly military adventuring) is not mentioned even by way of denial.

Still more curiously, there is an almost-total absence of reference to the major texts on Kissinger's own subject: statecraft, its philosophy and history. One quick pat for Lord Bryce, and un-indexed nod to de Tocqueville's *Memoirs* – the reader, at this point, feels like one who, forcing down gelid cocoa, is reminded of the taste of chilled champagne – a passing cuff for Gramsci, and that's it. Not a look-in for Locke, Hume, Mill, Pareto, Oakeshott – or even Hobbes, whom one might have thought to be in Kissinger's line. Kissinger dilates upon his own 'penchant' for philosophy. Yet only one philosopher, Kant, is mentioned, just once, for an idea from a peripheral essay. In general, it would be hard to imagine a book less touched by Kantian ideas, or by philosophical thought of any sort except the kind executives mean when they talk of 'corporate philosophy'.

Lacking any intellectual distinction, Kissinger's pages – 'airless' they are indeed – are leavened only by Washington wisecracks, and large helpings of the pornography of power. We learn much, for instance, about the foibles of Richard Nixon, and this will recommend *The White House Years* to a certain groupie-readership. But what the book lacks above all is any clear sense of the flow and structure of time. Such huge and many-faceted books often append a chronology: here, there is none, nor any firm textual continuum to eliminate the need. William Shawcross has observed that the story of Cambodia – against which, with whatever motive, the White House was directing a vast aerial offensive – is treated for a period in obsessive detail, and then vanishes for years on end from the book's perspective.

Events, in *The White House Years*, are loosened from their natural conjunctions, and reset elaborately. The story of the Presidency begins with a substantial, indeed over-stuffed account of the European tour of February 1969, in which Nixon appears as peacemaker and conciliator: conducting grand *tours d'horizon* with de Gaulle, dining cosily with Harold Wilson at Chequers, and basking in the repute attaching to the man who was supposedly winding-down America's Asian war (the first business, in any narrative sense, to confront his Presidency). It is 180 pages and many contexts later before the reader learns that the itinerant peacemaker was issuing from his aircraft secret orders (only countermanded at the last moment, and then not for long) to begin the secret bombing of Cambodia.

Again: at page 739 Kissinger has reached July 1971. He is in Pakistan en route to China, enjoying a great 'cops-and-robbers' conspiracy with President Yahya Khan over keeping the Peking diversion secret. Kissinger estimates that this was the last bit of fun 'bluff' Yahya had before being overthrown in consequence of the 'upheaval' in East Pakistan. You have to trudge on to page 853 to reach the rather *earlier* date of April 1971, and Kissinger's acknowledgement that the 'upheaval' consisted largely of acts of genocide committed by the military units under his bluff playmate's command.

WHY SHOULD THE INTELLECTUAL POVERTY and narrative curiosities of Kissinger's memoirs matter? First, because his rise to power derived from his status (Harvard certificated) as an intellectual. Nixon, in a phrase Kissinger has used elsewhere, had a 'meatball mind'. He needed to make at least one appointment which would add mental lustre to his administration. He lacked the wide choice that Democratic presidents often enjoy, and he acquired Henry Kissinger (to considerable applause) from Nelson Rockefeller. It is, of course, more usual for people to reach high office by leading trade-unions, running businesses, displaying sitzfleisch-endurance, or just being good with a gun. But Kissinger's qualification is still a very old one, tracing back to the Greeks, to whom it seemed undeniable that intellect – the possession of a mind with unusual capacities for learning and rational introspection – was something which fitted a citizen to rule. In all its sordid adventures, the Western mind has never quite lost track of this idea, and no doubt it is potent in other cultures also.

Lacking any other substantial qualification, Kissinger presents as an unusually pure example of the intellectual drafted into politics: he must therefore be examined as such, just as we would want to know, when examining a soldier's political record, whether his medals were authentic, or obtained from a theatrical costumier's.

What is the essential nature of mind, or intellect – which was, by reputation, Kissinger's title to office, and evidence of which I allege to be lacking from his discourse? Coleridge, in a famous essay, asked himself what distinguished the 'man of superior mind', and decided that it was not, intrinsically, the weight and novelty of his remarks, nor yet their elegance of expression. He thought that it lay centrally in method and arrangement. With an 'ignorant man, though perhaps

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shrewd and able in his particular calling', we perceive

> . . . that the objects and events recur, in the narration in the same order, and with the same accompaniments, however accidental or impertinent, as they had first occurred to the narrator . . .

and Coleridge cites, as a prototype, Mistress Quickly (*Henry IV, Pt 2*):

> . . . Thous didst swear to me upon a parcel-gilt goblet, sitting in my Dolphin chamber, at the round table, by a sea-coal fire, on Wednesday in Whitsun week when the prince broke thy head for liking his father to a singing-man of Windsor . . .

This, at least, is not Kissinger's error – though the one-damn-thing-after-another quality will be recognisable to anyone who has dealt with the memoirs of Harold Wilson – or, still more, the scatological jumble of Nixon's White House tapes. Its cause, in Coleridge's diagnosis, is 'the want of a *staple*, or *starting-post* in the narrator himself: from the absence of the *leading Thought*, which. . . we may not-inaptly call the INITIATIVE'.

There are more technical and intricate arguments for the notion that the mind must possess an initiative, must set out to invent any world it wishes to perceive – and cannot be a mere receptacle, or 'bucket' in Popper's dismissive phrase. Still, Coleridge's literary models are perhaps more easily assimilable. Given a 'staple' in the narrator, products of intellect are recognisable enough, and

> the first merit, that which admits neither substitute nor equivalent, is, that *everything is in its place*. Where this charm is wanting, every other merit . . . becomes an additional ground of accusation and regret.

Intellect, like clockwork, will 'divide and announce the silent and otherwise indistinguishable lapse of time', but

> the man of methodical industry and honourable pursuits does more: he realises its ideal divisions, and gives character and individuality to its moments. If the idle are described as killing time, he may justly be said to call it into life and moral being . . . (making it) the distinct object not only of the consciousness but of the conscience . . . (rather than that) he lives in time, time lives in him. His days, months and years . . . will survive the wreck of worlds, and remain extant when time shall be no more.

One asks: does Kissinger's way of dealing with Yahya Khan cause time to become the distinct object of consciousness and conscience?

Coleridge contrasts Mistress Quickly's gabble with some of Shakespeare's tautest verse, in which Hamlet, aboard ship, discovers the papers in the death-plot against him ('Up from my cabin/My seagown scarf'd about me, in the dark/Grop'd I find them out; had my desire,/Fingered their packet; and in fine, withdrew/To mine own room again . . .'). But this kind of writing, in which things 'most remote and diverse in time, place and outward circumstance, are brought into mental continguity' depends on a balance, and

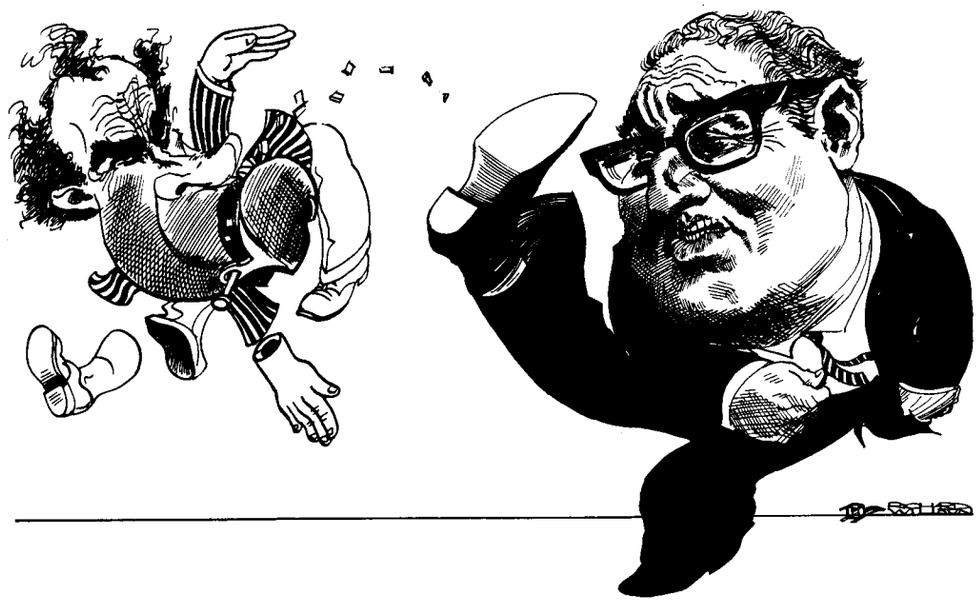
> when the prerogative of the mind is stretched into despotism, the discourse may degenerate into the grotesque or the fantastical.

IN *WHITE HOUSE YEARS*, is everything 'in its place', or does prerogative become despotism? The invasion of Cambodia makes a good case-study, because it is one where extra light is cast on Kissinger's processes by the existence of variorum texts — the published book, that is, and the 'leaked' proofs which show what Kissinger had composed before he saw Shawcross's *Sideshow*.

Kissinger suggests (p.485) that the invasion, in spring 1970, was provoked by Communist onslaughts against Lon Nol: these being supported by the recently-deposed Sihanouk in precipitate alliance with Peking, 'still considered the most revolutionary capital in the world . . . with which we had no means of communication whatever'. This stuff was inserted post-*Sideshow*, countering Shawcross's allegation that there was little rational motivation involved: seemingly, the job was rushed, because it jars with the passages at p.684-93, where Washington's own precisely-contemporary negotiations with the Peking untouchables are discussed in no small detail. Still, if this is despotism, it is of a kind detectable by the enduring reader.

The invasion was aimed at North Vietnam's 'sanctuaries' inside Cambodia, which had been under secret air attack since the previous year. Naturally, a *provoked* invasion can hardly be pre-meditated, and Kissinger (p.487) says as much:

> There had been no consideration of attacking the sanctuaries before April 21. The final decision was taken on April 28.



Again, a post-*Sideshow* insertion, but accompanied this time with consequential surgery. As first written, this chapter included a memo written for Nixon's use at a meeting on April 26, which said in part:

> The combined US-ARVN operation into Base Area 352-353 (*the Fish Hook area of Cambodia*) has been under preparation by MACV* for several weeks, but up until now secretary Laird has not been aware of the likelihood of its being approved and opposition can be expected from him as well from the Secretary of State . . .

Such a document would surely be 'in its place' as part of a chapter on the timing of the invasion decision: most readers would imagine 'several weeks' as going back rather before April 21 from April 26, and would be intrigued by the lack of knowledge attributed to the Secretaries of State (Rogers) and Defence (Laird). But it has vanished from *The White House Years*.

I took up this question of the role of the two Secretaries at Dr Kissinger's press conference last week. The published book, I said, recorded the following situation on April 24:

> Since the National Security Council meeting two days earlier, the Secretaries of State and Defence had not been heard from. They knew of contingency plans involving US forces . . .

The suggestion conveyed is of men largely complaisant, not ones being actively circumvented. Yet this insertion replaced a quite different passage:

> All planning so far had been conducted without the participation of the Secretaries of State and Defence, who in fact devoted much of their energy to cutting-back on even the South Vietnamese operation into the Parrot's Beak. *(Ed: a much less significant operation, agreed to at the NSC.)*

This suggests that the Secretaries (one of whom, Rogers, was eventually replaced by Kissinger) were not being listened to, rather than not being heard from. It seemed to me, I said to Kissinger, that the new version was aimed at widespread criticism, evoked by *Sideshow*, of White House autocracy. Which one was true?

Both, he replied.

His lengthy explanation centred on the idea that the two Cabinet officers were only cut out of the system for two days: everything being disclosed to them at an April 26 meeting. This would be a reasonable argument in the context of decision-making stretched over several weeks: but in order to deny premeditation, Kissinger has already destroyed the evidence that anything so long-drawn-out occurred. Most people would feel that two days is quite a time, coming in the latter part of a week when a whole new war is being slapped together.

THE SECTIONS of the book which confront the events described in *Sideshow* are between pages 239-254 and 457-475, and this is also the extent to which 'variorum' text exists. Most of these pages have significant changes, by insertion or excision or both, and there are several new passages running to hundreds of words. What are we to make of other parts of the book, where the Kissinger version has not been undermined by detailed research, and the effects of the Freedom of Information Act?

Dr Kissinger claims that the changes are such as might be found in the proofs of anyone's memoirs: some indeed are, but not the sort described above. (And it's worth remembering that, before the evidence came out, David Frost taxed him with the sugges-

*Military Assistance Command, Vietnam.

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tion that he had rewritten in an attempt to rebut Shawcross. 'I added to the book exactly one paragraph', said Kissinger, 'and one or two footnotes.') Although he claims to have written a historian's book, the truth appears to be that the past, to Kissinger, is rather like a pack of cards, which can be shuffled and re-shuffled at will. Time, far from being 'called into moral being', is thus assassinated: it contains no trajectory which might confront the hero of *The White House Years* with a real human dilemma, such as the handling of personal relationships when trying (notionally, anyway) to use a beastly regime like Yahya's for some higher purpose. Vast mental agility is required to juggle such masses of material, and surely no other living politician could attempt it. But this is not intellect at work, it is anti-intellect: the book is a kind of Black Hole of consciousness.

What really happened in Indochina? Essentially, the American enterprise was always impossible. This is not an equation which can be much affected by making out the best possible case for the South Vietnamese regime and the worst possible case for the communists: the essential term consisted in the fact that the communists were always in possession of Vietnam's ancient, inflexible nationalism. The nation involved has more than 50 million people. Therefore the communists could only be defeated by large land forces, taking heavy casualties. These were unavailable – not through epidemic American cowardice, but for lack of a Vietnamese attack on Pearl Harbour.

Aerial bombardment and high-technology warfare were a delusion. Deployed by a superpower, they may wreck societies, but they cannot hold military or political territory. Therefore, the concrete choice the West had to make in Indochina was not between liberal democracy and international communism. It was a choice about the level of destruction to be applied to nationalist communism in the course of its predictable, local victory: the level eventually imposed (though short of nuclear holocaust) was horribly disproportionate to the merits of the dispute.

In this situation, those who resist a movement may indeed be responsible for the form it assumes. The thought is moderately complicated within a context dominated by the 1939-45 model of war as a conflict between peoples of roughly equivalent development. The issue is therefore readily oversimplified by exercise of mental agility. 'We destabilised Cambodia', said Kissinger last week, 'the way Britain destabilised Poland in 1939.' This could only deceive people (but they are a majority) whose knowledge about Indochina is vestigial: discourse becomes grotesque and fantastical when mind is employed to manufacture such comparisons.

NOBODY ACCURATELY FORESAW the Khmer Rouge nightmare, or contends that Kissinger should have. But what is clear is that when Kissinger and Nixon began their work, the Khmer Rouge was a splinter group, no more capable of achieving power than the Bolsheviks could have prevailed without the carnage and chaos of the first world war. And the disaster precipitated by America's aerial bombardment and invasion was no lesser in its impact on that small and vulnerable society. To be sure, one cannot predict just what will happen to a society if one props up a corrupt puppet like Lon Nol as its ruler, for five years, saturating its countryside with high explosive in an effort to preserve him. But one can predict that it will be nothing good, and it is mere sleight-of-hand to suggest that such actions can be retrospectively sanctified by the emergence of Pol Pot.

Tirelessly shuffling his pack, Kissinger suggests that the North Vietnamese caused everything by using Cambodian territory for their bases and supply-routes, thus violating neutrality before he and Nixon did. True, the law sometimes allows one offence to cancel out another, but only if restraint and proportionality are applied – as any landowner will find if he pleads justifiable homicide after machine-gunning a few trespassers on a tenant's farm. The practical truth is that America's 'defence' of Cambodia's shaky neutrality never looked like doing anything but blow every vestige of it apart. All the real evidence suggests that the widening of the war into Cambodia was an irrational act: Kissinger's whole book is an attempt, by means of misdirection, elision, suppression and narrative disaggregation to clothe this and other irrationalities in the appearance of sober statesmanship. He receives the accolade for this from Dr David Owen in *The Times* ('on . . . the delicate balance of power which determines our survival, he is . . . careful, clear-headed, constrained and consistent.')

The real story, to which *The White House Years* relates chiefly as a huge, oppressive mirage, is of an attempted application of the Madman Theory of War – more academically, an attempt to cash in the significant premium attaching to irrationality. Nixon, boozing in front of the image of *Patton*, was no doubt taken with this idea, but its elaboration was surely beyond him. A pretence of intellectualism would have been required for that. Also, of course, a carapace of secrecy, for in the nuclear age any democratic politician who confesses to the practice of irrationality will be smartly booted out. (The non-democratic solution is probably a bullet.) More publicly, Kissinger and Nixon deployed the accompanying idea of 'linkage': a misapplication to international affairs of the simplistic causality in the old rhyme about the fire that made the stick beat the dog, which made the dog bite the pig, and in turn made the pig jump over the stile.

On this scheme, which Kissinger claims to have adumbrated at the outset, the idea was that the USSR, in order to obtain Middle East peace settlements, trade concession, SALT agreements and other goodies, would be persuaded to persuade the North Vietnamese to give up the aims for which they had fought without compromise for 20 years. This was not a very good idea: a better one would have been to use Nixon's conservative credentials, then unassailable, to persuade the American public that a war in which casualties are not acceptable must be abandoned.

However, it was in outline something to which rational thought could be applied. And indeed the Russians (who certainly had influence though not control in Hanoi) tried to respond. The Soviet ambassador to Washington, Anatoly Dobrynin, asked Kissinger in May 1969: 'Supposing the war were settled, how would you go about improving relations?' To this Kissinger says (p. 161) he could not 'answer in precise terms'. This is pretty amazing, seeing that we learn on p. 226 that the Indochina war was by that time so serious a problem in America that 'the comity by which a democratic society must live had broken down'.

The truth about the secret bombing of communist base areas inside Cambodia (which had already begun by then) and the invasion which occurred a year later is not that they were provoked in any genuine sense by the communist offensives which were going on. They were stratagems, designed as best they could to evade the democratic restrictions of the US constitution, to convince Hanoi of Nixon's endless bellicosity, and to implant the fear that worse could yet befall. With terror thus injected into the apparatus of 'linkage' a famous victory was to be procurred. It was a scheme of horrible recklessness, and Watergate was born out of the distortions it produced.

But the real price for this recklessness was paid, and continues to be paid, by the Cambodians. It may be worth saying, that only a pseudo-intellectual could embrace the profoundly absurd idea that irrationality can ever have calculable consequences.

NOBODY NEEDS telling that the defence of democracy is perilous. But many people still believe that 'geopolitics' can offer help, and Kissinger's ponderous memoirs are designed to reinforce that belief. They are not designed to be read, so much as to convey awe through their vast bulk and meaningless detail. The majority of people are honest, busy and aware that intellectual effort is difficult. It is an easy step to assume that any difficult book is a work of intellect.

Like many nonsense-systems, 'geopolitics' begins with the reasonable observation that nations bargain somewhat like individuals. You don't sell your car at a friendly price to someone who steals your mother's lettuces. But the 'somewhat' doesn't go very far, and Kissinger's account, once stripped of persiflage, is perceptibly absurd. It is: 'How we dragged our heels on SALT and the Middle East and East-West trade, while we frightened the Vietnamese (oh, yes, and the *bad* Cambodians – same thing) and drove the Russians out of their minds (as Nixon put it) by cuddling up to the Chinese (bit of a shock to the Japanese), which involved 'tilting' towards Pakistan, as against India, 'cos the Pakistanis were putting us in touch with the Chinese (tough darts, Sheikh Mujib, but writing a letter would have been too simple), in order to make the Russians do a better deal on SALT, or West Berlin, or anyway stop bugging us.' It's perhaps understandable that even the Grand Master could not give a precise answer when Dobrynin asked him what was going on.

Geopolitics, in fact, has the same relationship as chess to real warfare and real politics – which is to say, no significant relationship whatever. The qualification for expounding it is an inability to tell the difference between men and chessmen.

The rules of chess are certainly complex enough to generate an enormous array of situation. But the 'rules' of the real world, insofar as we know them at all, are infinitely more complex, and uncertain. Because of this, moral intuition is just as necessary as rationalising power in the attempt to chart a passage; indeed, 'mind', or 'intelligence', which the Greeks taught us to respect, consists in their intimate, active fusion. Kissinger's book is an exercise in separating them.

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Penelope Mortimer

Lusting After Ghosts

The Executioner's Song: The Story of Gary Gilmore by NORMAN MAILER *Hutchinson* £8.85
The Right Stuff by TOM WOLFE *Cape* £6.95

In the mid-Sixties, when Tom Wolfe was promoting 'The New Journalism', he labelled Mailer as a Literary Gentleman in the Grandstand. Unlike Wolfe himself, Mailer apparently suffered from an 'odd defect . . . reluctance to take out the notebook and cross the genteel line and head through the door marked Keep Out'. While hailing *Armies of the Night* as a *succès d'estime*, Wolfe actually accused its author of diffidence.

The charge – like the whole confused, incoherent theory behind it – was absurd. 'The New Journalism' demanded a human camera with the power of becoming 'absolutely invisible', Mailer specialised in self-portraits against a background of history. A 'New Journalist' had to be prepared to spend five years researching his story, as Capote had done with his jackpot *In Cold Blood*; he had to join the army, like John Sack, and actually fight in Vietnam before writing about it; he had to run with the Hell's Angels for 18 months, like Hunter Thompson. Mailer, on his own admission, is a lazy man. He hadn't the patience, the curiosity or the funds to do his own investigating. But Mailer on Mailer was wearing thin, his novels were being called 'inept', he hated to be known as a plain journalist and he had prodigious personal liabilities. He needed a quick kill – somehow he had to squeeze his ego through that door and cash in.

Marilyn, not only dead but naked, provided the answer. A photographer called Lawrence Schiller happened to take some snaps on the day she did her nude swimming scene in *Something's Got To Give*; a few months later, she was dead. Schiller collected an album of pictures, and contacted Mailer. There were no problems about living with the subject, listening to her, tediously piecing together her history; Mailer didn't even know the woman. The result (one of the most repulsive books in living memory, but let that pass) was yet another 'new event in literature' – the Novel Biography.

When the same Lawrence Schiller – now turned entrepreneur – gave Mailer 15,000 pages of data on another notorious corpse, Gary Gilmore, it must have been a happy day. Gilmore had made a few moments of history trying to save his life. He succeeded in getting himself legally shot on 17 January 1977. *Marilyn* had inevitably been a necrophilic work: Mailer could do little more than lust, however mournfully, after her ghost. But he could, he thought, identify with Gilmore, raise him from the dead as a Mailer hero, tough, tender, sensitive, maligned, misunderstood: all in all, given the fallibility of the human condition, magnificent.

Gilmore may have been an illegitimate grandson of Houdini. His father – a hereditary trait, perhaps – was unpredictable, forever escaping from tight corners and disappearing. His mother, infested with children, was a good woman. Gilmore took to petty crime at an early age, and was educated in gaol. After 13 years inside, he was released on parole and returned to his Mormon family in Salt Lake City. He drank too much; he was unreliable; he pilfered; he fell obsessively in love with a simple-minded girl called Nicole. Finally he shot two strangers at point-blank range and, being diagnosed by the psychiatrists as sane, was condemned to death.

Capital punishment was never abolished in Utah, but it hadn't been used for some time. Gilmore, with his Mormon background, believed in reincarnation. He considered that he deserved the death penalty, but not to be forced to waste any more of his temporal life in a noisy, stinking prison, being tortured with Prolixin and ECT. The law had the right to condemn him to death, but not to hell. When

mercy threatened, he hired lawyers. Again and again, over those winter months of '76/'77, the execution date was set, then stayed, then set again. Meanwhile, Gilmore became 'a cottage industry', run by Lawrence Schiller. Thousands of dollars were invested in his execution, but still the do-gooders tried to keep him alive. Nicole smuggled 25 Seconals and 10 Dalmanes into prison, tucked inside her vagina; Gilmore transferred them to his rectum, and that night they both attempted suicide. Gilmore survived, and Nicole was put in solitary confinement in a mental home for the rest of her lover's life.

This first half of the book is supremely successful: and if I write that with difficulty, through gritted typewriter keys, it's my problem. Using the device of scene-by-scene construction, so that the reader is never distracted or bored by narrative, Mailer very skilfully produces a kind of verbal movie of Gilmore and his world up to the suicide pact. In this role, as in those of director and editor, he is properly invisible; as writer, he lapses only very occasionally into the anguished metaphor of the frustrated novelist. It's true that Gilmore emerges (I am still referring to the first half of the book) as a sympathetic character – but why not? What curious moral satisfaction would we get from having him presented as just another thug, a run-of-the-mill psychopath? From the evidence of his letters to Nicole, his intelligence and sensitivity were far superior to that of your average Mormon in Main Street, and Mailer's portrait of him is far more edifying – if edification is necessary – than most of the illiterate halfwits we currently use for heroes.

From this point, however, the book deteriorates. Gilmore and Nicole become minor characters, and Mailer's emphasis shifts to the scavengers, the ravening hordes of journalists, movie tycoons, TV companies, speculators of all kinds who are trampling each other to be in at the kill. They are dreary, trivial people, their behaviour predictable. Slowly (I speak for myself, having honestly struggled not to hang Mailer for the bad names I have called him in the past) one realises that the tone of the book has changed. As Gilmore is sold and resold, shot, drawn and quartered, the discreet absence of commentary becomes the silence of consent. Mailer is running with the pack. Schiller is clearly despicable, but here is Mailer, a twinkle in his eye, presenting him as an endearing rogue. It is a nasty exhibition, and would be tragic if the characters had more stature. When the book ends with an orgy of forelock-pulling and grovelling gratitude, one feels little more than weary disgust. The skill and even artistry of the first half is all too easily forgotten.

That said, *Executioner's Song* is a good deal better than *Marilyn*. Gilmore's letters, recorded interviews and taped dialogue give it at least a modicum of humour, dignity and passion. I detest every aspect of this kind of exploitative journalism, but there is no point in expecting more of Mailer than he does of himself: 'I'm like a kept woman of the nineteenth century, looking for someone to pay her bills. But I don't want to be a whore for nothing.' With Gilmore packed away in his bank account, and Larry Schiller out there sniffing the wind, Mailer should be able to put his feet up and eat bonbons for some time to come.

Tom Wolfe's *The Right Stuff* is about the first American astronauts, and it is not a great example of 'New Journalism'. Like all Wolfe's writing, it is not a great example of anything. 'If Wolfe described Judgment Day, he would somehow make it sound like July the Fourth in the Hamptons.

The Right Stuff looks like Robert Redford in blue, and sounds like closing time on Cup Final night:

> *Manliness, manhood, manly courage* . . . there was something ancient, primordial, irresistible about the challenge of this stuff, no matter what a sophisticated and rational age one (sic) might think he lived in.

Shepherd, Glenn, Carpenter, Cooper, Grissom, Schirra and Slayton had The Right Stuff, Wolfe tells us. Now, as a New Journalist, it's his job to get us inside that shining armour and give us a swig from the Grail. We don't get near it,

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The fact that *Life* held the exclusive rights to the astronauts' stories, and that it's all 20 years old anyway, couldn't have helped. But Wolfe, the intellectual from Yale, the observer of air-conditioned abstracts in centrally-heated penthouses, has no entrée into the hearts and minds, motives and memories, of these farmers' sons from the styx. He may have talked with some of them (though he acknowledges only 'the personal recollections of many people, pilots and non-pilots, who were intimately involved') and he has certainly done his astronautical homework. But, to quote his own criticism of Mailer's book on the first moon shot, he 'never succeeds in taking the reader inside the capsule, much less inside the points of view or central nervous systems of the astronauts themselves'.

I did manage to understand the humiliation of professional pilots whose performance in a space capsule – bound hand and foot, stripped of all initiative – was inferior, if anything, to that of the heroic apes who first hurtled through the heavens, expecting no reward but a banana-flavoured pellet and a pat on the head. Wolfe has an attitude towards apes. I was properly appalled by the 'Low Rent' landscapes where the tests took place, Florida swamps and godforsaken deserts – Wolfe obviously knows them all. I was impressed by the grotesque ceremonial barbecue held in the Houston Coliseum – the scene is allowed to speak for itself, without italics, exclamation points, 'Pow! Wham! Bam!' balloons. Apart from the information that their children were longing to pee, there is no attempt to bring the astronauts to life. They remain distant, spotlit, insignificant, as possibly Wolfe saw them.

But how does he get over Mailer's problem of 'getting inside the central nervous systems' of these men? It's easy:

> He's burning ... There's rocket lava inside the helmet ... The seat has fallen away ... He can't see ... Blood pouring out of his left eye and there's smoke inside the helmet ... Rubber! ... It's the seal between the helmet and the pressure suit ... It's burning up ... The propellant won't quit ... A tremendous *whoosh* ...

And so on. Wearily, deadened by hyperbole, one skips to the end of the chapter to see whether the fellow survived. Not that one really cares. It might as well have happened on Mars, and probably will. I can only wish Tom Wolfe a speedy return to the art galleries and salons where he belongs, and give this book to a space-struck schoolboy; preferably one with the Right Stuff, if they still exist outside detention centres.

Patricia Craig

Sorrowful and Senile

Irish Identity and the Literary Revival: Synge, Yeats, Joyce, O'Casey by G. J. WATSON *Croom Helm* £12.95

Synge and the Irish Language by DECLAN KIBERD *Macmillan* £12

The origins of the modern Irish literary movement may be traced to the crucial meeting between Yeats and John O'Leary, the old Fenian who returned to Dublin in 1885 after 20 years' imprisonment. O'Leary, whose ultimate literary function was to embody romantic Ireland, urged on the young poet a course of immersion in Irish writings: works by Mitchel, Davis, Mangan, Allingham and Ferguson were among those he recommended, and bought by the 'armload'. Irish

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Peter Redgrove

Cramming

Three hours of outwitting the hero. How old is the ship?
The medusoid head of the Classics Professor
Mouth twisted from teaching the terrible syllables.
A drum theme that signifies water; another, waves;
A third that signifies ghosts; a fourth, heroic mountains;
A comedy with a cast of one in the dark outhouse
That smells like the inside of a boot, where they keep
The old beekeeper's skips, masks, aprons and gloves,
Cobwebby roots and trays of dry dirt. With the roof off
In three months it has become a bright garden
Where I consume golden apples in my fingers, with the door padlocked.

The Veil and the Mask

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J. G. MERQUIOR
Foreword by Ernest Gellner
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nationalism, antiquarianism and spirituality began to be associated. The poet, whom English models then available had failed to inspire, had found his subject.

The glamour ascribed to Ireland's past and to peasant superstitions derived at least partly from a repudiation of the stage-Irish, 'Paddy-with-the-pig' figure popularised by *Punch*. 'Comic slovenliness' is at the other extreme from poetic dignity. Yeats, at least in the beginning, wrote as much as any nationalist poet to sweeten Ireland's wrong; and one of the country's most insidious wrongs was the frightful image of the loud-mouthed, loose-lipped buffoon called up, in the popular English mind, by the term 'Irishman'. However, Yeats's adherence to the nationalist cause, even at its most intense, was never simple. While he opted for Irishness he found many of its manifestations repugnant. One of his missions was to educate Irish taste in cultural matters and his later poetry is full of contempt for those who proved unresponsive. It is well known that his allegiance shifted, by degrees, from the peasantry to the Anglo-Irish 'nobility'; G. J. Watson is right to stress the poet's use of an aristocratic tradition as a metaphor for fundamental social values and ideals. '. . . his conception of aristocracy owes very little to any crude urge to assert class-superiority, and wealth and power are not valued for their own sakes.'

It's an important point, in the context of 'Irish identity', which might seem at odds with the stance of high-toned disdain which Yeats sometimes assumed. For the Anglo-Irishman the 'indomitable Irishry' were close to the soil in a spiritual way, or bred to a stately heroism and beauty: between these were squalor, blindness and ignorance, products of the servile temperament that Joyce also decried. Nothing, indeed, is more disagreeable than the person who makes a poor mouth. In his introduction G. J. Watson remarks on the critical tendency to dissociate the works of Yeats and Joyce, as far as possible, from their underlying Irishness which is 'frequently perceived or presented as a limiting "background", which is complicated, rather boring, and to be got out of the way fast'. This is sufficient justification for his own book which only occasionally loses sight of its declared subject – the lengthy discussion of *Ulysses*, for instance, comes to the question of 'Irish identity' somewhat abruptly, almost as an afterthought. Joyce, who applied the term 'nightmare' to his country's history in a phrase which has passed into the common literary store, dismissed the whole Gaelic folk-tradition as 'sorrowful and senile'. He was not in the least receptive to the mystique of a glorified past. For Joyce, the significant figure in Ireland's story is the informer, always ready to furnish the instance of betrayal on which the whole romantic structure depended. A bitter sense of cultural inferiority, the burden of the Catholic Dubliner, is at the root of Joyce's disaffection; the passionate realist can have no truck with falsification, as he sees it, in the interest of national glory.

Joyce's earliest intention was to 'write a chapter of the moral history of my country'; Sean O'Casey, a simpler writer and propagandist, composed his dramas out of a straightforward wish to discredit vapid republicanism which distorted true socialist principles. His plays are subjected to competent analysis in *Irish Identity*.

Synge is a special case, an Ascendancy writer who learnt Gaelic, evolved a dramatic style entirely his own and managed to offend almost every cultural group in the country. Declan Kiberd's study ably defends the playwright against the charge that he never mastered the Irish language, which indeed was only one of the accusations hurled at him. The famous Abbey Theatre riots which followed the opening of *The Playboy* in January 1907 were instigated by 'Gaelic Leaguers foaming at the mouth' (so they appeared to Sean O'Casey who was jostled as he stood in the crowd outside the theatre); it seemed that members of the audience had taken exception to aspersions cast by Synge on Irish virtue and Irish womanliness, qualities sacred to the volatile nationalist. Padraig Pearse, the republican leader executed in 1916, went a couple of degrees further when he isolated for critical comment the playwright's 'blasphemy' against 'the moral order of the universe'.

There are a number of grounds on which Synge may be faulted, but I do not think that this is one of them. More to the point was Joyce's observation: 'in my experience the peasants of Ireland are a very different people from what he made them to be, a hard, crafty and matter-of-fact lot.' However, it's undeniable that Synge was under no obligation to present factual representations of peasant life; 'Synge's plays are not, and are not intended as, documentary studies . . .' declares G. J. Watson, who finds much in them to admire. Neither he nor Declan Kiberd seems at all uncertain about the artistic validity of Synge's picturesque language, neither English, Anglo-Irish nor good Connacht Gaelic, which surely contains a built-in element of self-parody. Myles na gLopaleen (Flann O'Brien) acknowledges this when he writes:

> It is not that Synge made people less worthy or nastier, or even better than they are, but he brought forward with the utmost solemnity amusing clowns talking a sub-language of their own and bade us take them seriously . . . And now the curse has come upon us, because I have personally met in the streets of Ireland persons who are clearly out of Synge's plays. They talk and dress like that, and damn the drink they'll swally but the mug of porter in the long nights after Samhain.

Phrases and expressions which are perfectly ordinary and grammatically unexceptionable in Irish may acquire a spurious quaintness as a result of literal translation. The simplest example is the continuous present tense, 'bíonn', which in English becomes odd and funny: 'does be'. Of course Synge was able to exploit the dramatic possibilities inherent in his factitious language. But his highly-coloured speech patterns still make some critics uneasy, for reasons which have nothing to do with nationalism or philistinism, and I think this might have been brought out.

However, G. J. Watson on the whole writes vigorous and intelligent criticism in a style which has not been invaded by pedantry or jargon. Declan Kiberd's effort to amass all the facts relating to his more specialised subject has resulted, to an extent, in an excess of listing and documentation. His book is informative but uneven in tone. He's apt to repeat statements: one of Synge's remarks to Lady Gregory which is quoted on p. 90 appears again on p. 108 as if it's new. And when he refers to Synge's 'rudimentary' mistakes in the Irish language we have to wonder if these later became fully-developed.

John Arden

Semiotic Constipation

Media, Politics & Culture: a Socialist View edited by Carl Gardner *Macmillan* £8.95 and £3.95

The Aesthetic Dimension by HERBERT MARCUSE *Papermac* £1.95

Subculture: the Meaning of Style by DICK HEBDIGE *Methuen* £5.75 and £2.75

There is so much intimidating critical comment and wire-spectacled analysis going about at the moment that it is becoming harder and harder to let the ordinary creative imagination flow without self-induced, or book-induced, sclerosis blocking one up completely. My own mind came to a complete standstill at this sentence in Mr Gardner's introduction to *Media, Politics & Culture*, a collection of essays by like-minded writers.

> The theatre too has been sadly undertheorised, though it does have its influential revolutionary precursors in the shape of Meyerhold, Piscator and Brecht in the 1920s and 1930s.

Now this sentence is obviously true. Contemporary British left-agitprop muddles around with a vague Brechtery but there has indeed been no strong effort devoted to checking out just how relevant the pre-Hitler and the pre-Stalin German and Soviet techniques really are to our present themes, audiences, dramatic traditions and social problems. I mean, could Brecht have propounded exactly the same theory of Alienation in a theatre that also included the RSC, *Hello Dolly* and *My Fair Lady* (revived), the trade union stalwart Sir P. Hall, and the works of H. Pinter? To say nothing of the Arts Council relating 'standards of excellence' to the demands of a Thatcherite Treasury? So I don't dispute Mr Gardner's facts: therefore it must be his tone that makes me want to sound off like a half-cock Peter Simple.

From what does the tone derive? Aha, now we have it. The incriminating word is *sadly*. 'Sadly undertheorised': immediate analogy 'sadly undernourished': without food, without theory, the patient will die. Tell that to Aeschylus who invented tragedy before Aristotle was born. Tell it to Shakespeare who learnt his business through rule-of-thumb and the examples of his predecessors in the craft. Let us admit there can be a need for theoretical diagrammarians at certain times of severe theatrical ill-health: and this may be one of those times. But do not marry *sadly* so absolutely to *undertheorised* like the prophylactic word-junctures *good wife* or *learned counsel*, which imply such a terrible fear lest women be bad or lawyers ignorant that we'd best not even hint at it.

The trouble is that in England the arts and political 'progressivism' can still come together only in the context of the old puritanism: our socialists are too often crypto-Calvinists, with all that that indicates. Combative Biblical exegesis combined with democratic agitation combined with the moral righteousness of – for instance – the sack of

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Drogheda and the closure of our last native theatre that did not need to rely upon Irish-nurtured talent . . . There is a feeling throughout so much of the Gardner book of suppressed resentment towards artistic practitioners and delight at being able to talk about class-structure and bourgeoisies instead of having to look effectively at concrete pieces of achieved creative work that I am in danger of seeming to slight the whole thing. So let me say that no contributor writes nothing but rubbish, that all of them utter much extremely good sense, and that Raymond Williams in particular caused me real stimulation with his essay on mass-media. But generally I do not know who they are writing for: whether practitioners, students, political activists, or the recipient public. Everybody in the communications business will need the book on their shelves: but I don't know how many will need to refer to it very often.

Marcuse, on the other hand, communicates enthusiasm. *Under-enthused* is much more permanently sad than *under-theorised*: but in his case the two phrases mean practically the same thing, thank God. He sums up:

> The permanent transformation of society under the principle of freedom is necessitated not only by the continued existence of class interests. The institutions of a socialist society, even in their most democratic form, could never resolve all the conflicts between the universal and the particular, between human beings and nature, between individual and individual. Socialism does not and cannot liberate Eros from Thanatos . . .

Art, however, 'breaks open a dimension inaccessible to other experience'. When one reads theory like that, one actually wants to get on and get something *made*.

But thus to generalise about art requires more precise definition. Marcuse's examples are Shakespeare, Brecht, Baudelaire, Beckett, Goethe, etc. They belong to the 'accepted mainstream' of western culture as understood by German-American academia, just as the Gardner contributors on the whole see socialism as bounded by the requirements of British society without much reference to the enormous cultural complications brought in to us by immigration and the imperial hangover. The acrid relations, for instance (my own King Charles's head coming in once again), between British leftism and Irish republicanism are not clarified by either book.

Dick Hebdige endeavours to handle some of this complexity. His analysis of subcultures, approached by way of Mods, Skinheads, Punks and so forth, is hung on a tight thread of association between all these native eruptions and the phenomenon of black immigrants. He doesn't deal with the Irish; but sets up a technique of what he insists on calling 'semiotics' (by which I think he means the language not only of words but of every aspect of human behaviour – i.e. the perennial material of art and poetry at all periods, but now elevated into a science. I am suspicious: and also suspicious of my suspicions . . .) whereby we may advance the application of his observation as far as we want. It would have been interesting to find out his views on the recent use of skinhead styles combined with tartan by Loyalist youth in Belfast and its political repercussions. I met a young woman from Dublin who was turned out of a small town just south of the Border for wearing blue denims. Denim= northern sectarianism: sectarianism = riots: QED they made a by-law! Mr Hebdige writes in two styles: straightforward lively English and the lingua franca of international socio/politico/analytico-abstractionism (for which Marcuse alas must bear much blame). I prefer the first. The second will do him no harm in collegiate circles. But either way he is well worth reading. Puzzled parents and teachers will learn a lot they had only guessed at: which sounds trivial but in fact is a very adequate justification for any book about young people.

Among this week's contributors:

PATRICIA HEWITT has been General Secretary of the National Council for Civil Liberties since 1974.

PAUL FOOT is a columnist on the *Daily Mirror*. He is the author of *The Politics of Harold Wilson* (1974).

DAVID COOK's most recent novel is *Winter Doves* (Secker, 1979).

PATRICIA CRAIG is co-author of *You're a Brick, Angela* and *Women and Children First.*

PENELOPE MORTIMER's autobiography *About Time* (1979) is a winner of the Whitbread Award.

PETER SHERWOOD is Lecturer in Hungarian at the School of Slavonic Studies.

BEVIS HILLIER, formerly editor of *The Connoisseur*, is currently working on the authorised biography of Sir John Betjeman.

RICHARD CORK's *The Social Role of Art* will be published by Gordon Fraser early next year.

RONALD HAYMAN's books include *John Gielgud: A Biography*, *Techniques of Acting* and *Tolstoy*.

David Cook

Spirit of Wimbledon

A Genoese Fancy by DAVID HUGHES *Constable* £5.50
The Upas Tree by EVA HANAGAN *Constable* £4.95
The Siesta by PATRICE CHAPLIN *Duckworth* £5.95
My Uncle Oswald by ROALD DAHL *Michael Joseph* £5.50

Some words may, in some small degree, change the world – usually one's own interior world, but if enough interior worlds be changed, the exterior world will change also. If they do, that's a bonus.

Of the novels under review, two do seem to me to supply some small bonus, one is an agreeable time-passer, and the last is likely to send a thinking man into numbed retreat and leave the thinking woman frothing at the mouth with anger.

David Hughes's *A Genoese Fancy* is gentle, funny and touching. It is set in the late 1940s and delightfully evokes that time. Uncle Norman looks after his orphaned nephew, Lionel, in a flat above his grocery shop in Wimbledon – the 'fancy' of the title is a kind of cake.

New Poetry 5

Edited by Peter Redgrove and Jon Silkin

The fifth Arts Council poetry anthology, now published by Hutchinson in association with the Arts Council of Great Britain and PEN, is a collection of the best poetry submitted to the Arts Council this year. Cased £4.95

New Poetry 6

Poems are being considered for our next anthology. Up to six poems, typed and in duplicate, each copy clearly marked with name and address, may be sent to The Editors, New Stories, c/o P.E.N., 7 Dilke Street, London SW3 4JE, by 31st December 1979

Unfortunately no acknowledgement can be sent and typescripts cannot be returned.

HUTCHINSON

Arts Council OF GREAT BRITAIN

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Lionel enjoys John Donne and Plato: Uncle Norman enjoys his food and platonic visits to the deliciously vermilion woman down the road:

> Mrs Egham began to run her hand briskly round his knee, as if polishing pewter. 'I only hope he's giving you some ideas,' she said. 'You need waking up, Norman. You let that wretched shop get on top of you, you're too kind, you must let the working class sing for its supper and stop mollycoddling it with your this-week's bargains . . . you don't want to be cutting cheese rations until you fall into a coma.'

Pictures from the novel remain with me. A cardboard cake, covered with icing to represent the Spirit of Wimbledon, which is cut by a headmistress in front of children hungry to consume it. A political meeting round a swimming pool, to an audience of five voters and a ginger cat. Uncle Norman excusing himself from priggish Lionel's talk of sex and death, carrying his plate of tripe and onions into the WC, there to sit with it on his knee, to concentrate on the tooth-mug and frosted glass until his appetite returns. In the end, Lionel finds a girl, and decides not to go to Oxford, leaving his uncle bereft of responsibility, transferred ambition, and affection. *A Genoese Fancy* is a kind of love story.

David Hughes's prose is packed with detail; it sparks one into laughter. Eva Hanagan's paragraphs flow more easily, providing continuous pleasure. *The Upas Tree* is the story of a woman in late middle-age, in thrall to her peevish, greedy, bullying, invalid mother; this must be in *The Guinness Book of Records* as among the five most-used plots in British fiction, but here it is told delicately, truthfully, and with humour.

Ms Hanagan shows us her heroine's anger after the mother's death, that she should have been left so much money, when for years she has been wearing out her knees on the kitchen floor, and sitting in layers of woollies to save fuel. But now she is alone in a large house. She says aloud, 'Why did you leave me, mother?' Young Ian comes to help with the garden. The stifled longing of an unfulfilled spinster of 50 for a young man is again not a new theme, but it is treated with humour and originality. A fine book.

And now for something completely lightweight. *The Siesta* reads as if it were written by someone in a hurry, and may be just as hurriedly read. Sylvia Chrystal is a stripper; she also juggles and walks the tight-rope. She happens to find herself, as anyone might, lying in a pool of blood beside an airport runway, and spends the novel trying to find out how she got there. Patrice Chaplin is not much concerned with the creation or exploration of character, but she knows a lot about jealousy, and I was taken with Sylvia's husband. While his 'star' wife is away in all the bars of Barcelona, hugging the toilet bowls of the Ladies' loos, on the principle that cold porcelain restores the memory, he stays at home in Hampstead with the phone off the hook, eating Sainsbury's frozen foods and watching telly.

Ms Chaplin's story is short, and with a twist at the end. If only *Uncle Oswald* had had a twist – or, better still, a knot – in his member, we might have been spared many of Roald Dahl's descriptions of its size, colour, pulse and agility. As matters are, it is for ever standing up to be counted. It is brave of Mr Dahl to have written a novel with a totally dislikeable hero, but I suspect that this was not his intention; Uncle Oswald's only admirer may be his creator, as if God had started off with Father Rolfe. I don't believe that many women will read far into the novel, since Mr Dahl divides all their sex into four kinds – elderly sex-starved battle axes, athletic nymphomaniacs, dumb beauties, or janes who are so plain as to be physically repulsive. 'Thick-necked', 'long-snouted', 'seldom washed', 'crocodiles' – that's just the girls of Girton in 1919.

So OK – Swift. It's not OK. It's not Swift.

Paul Foot

Utterly Broken

Final Term: The Labour Government, 1974-1976 by HAROLD WILSON *Weidenfeld* £8.95

'We emphasise,' said Harold Wilson, Shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer to a cheering Labour conference in Scarborough, 21 years ago, 'that the financial system must be in all respects the servant, not the master of the nation's destiny.' Six years later he walked into Downing Street as Prime Minister and very soon was grappling, not without stamina, with representatives of the financial system. By the time he won another more convincing election victory in March 1966, he thought he had them licked.

Four months later, the financial system reasserted its mastery. The run on the pound in July 1966 forced the Wilson Government to reverse almost every economic and social policy on which it had been elected. In his book about his first Premiership, Wilson wrote:

> It is interesting to ask why in a summer [1964] when we had a deficit running at the annual rate of £800m, there were few selling sterling short, while in a summer [1966] when we were running at a deficit only a fraction of that figure, anti-sterling speculation ran riot. Whatever explanation is given, it must transcend economic considerations.

His experience in his second Premiership, which he writes about in this book, is strikingly similar. From March 1974 to June 1975 the Labour government seemed to most of its supporters to be carrying out its programme with some pluck against odds far worse than in 1966. The worst outrages of Tory rule were repealed. The hated wage controls were lifted. Labour won another election, with a majority.

By mid-1975, of course, inflation was roaring away, but Wilson and Co had a strategy to deal with it. They planned a period of gentle exhortation towards wage restraint, without recourse to laws, threats of laws or even to 'norms'. Wilson expanded on this policy at the Royal Agricultural Show at Stoneleigh on 30 June 1975. There was, he emphasised, no need to be panicked into the wage controls which had been so disastrous under the Tories.

This speech led the next day in the *Guardian*'s words, which he quotes, to 'the biggest slide in the value of the pound against major world currencies to take place on one day in living memory'. In less than a week, the Labour and trade union leaders resorted to panic measures. A rigid £6 limit on wages was imposed. From that moment, as from July 1966, the Labour government never looked forward. There were two more years of fruitless wage restraint. Trade union confidence gave way to a mood of sacrificial despair. The few remaining commitments to defend and extend the welfare state were replaced by public spending cuts. The promised wealth tax was buried in a host of concessions to businessmen. And so on and so on, down the familiar road from compromise to capitulation.

The one remarkable metaphor in his book comes in Wilson's description of the June 1975 fiasco:

> . . . we were living on borrowed time. But what of the *bailiffs*, in the shape of the international financial community, from cautious treasurers of international corporations, multi-nationals, to currency operators and monetary speculators? Would they give us time? . . . *(my emphasis)*.

No, of course, they wouldn't. And not one of the Communists, Trotskyists and fellow travellers who, Wilson believes, are taking over the Labour Party today could have found a more devastating description: *the bailiffs of international capitalism evicted the Labour government from power*.

From power, but not from office. The homestead of 10 Downing Street, the seals and paraphernalia of office, were left to Labour Ministers for as long as it took them to unravel their own reforms of 1974. They were allowed to proceed about their official business, as zombies, keeping an eye forever open and an ear forever cocked for the bailiffs' next threat. Greater men than Harold Wilson have been broken by this process, and Harold Wilson has been broken utterly. This awful book is proof enough. There is in it not a trace of the cheeky irreverence for the high and mighty which occasionally illuminated his earlier speeches and writings.

The tone is set by his account of his first vital decision as Prime Minister in 1974:

> I contented myself with asking that the Napoleonic war pictures in the main dining room at Number 10 be brought back to their traditional position without delay.

Under the appoving eyes of Pitt and Nelson he stumbles through his dreary chronicle, reprinting his speeches at fantastic length; preening himself at royal audiences or summit meetings; quoting anything nice which anyone said about him. Nothing pleases him more than Peter Jenkins's conclusion in March 1976: 'The country does have a kind of National Government.'

There is, for instance, neither confirmation nor denial of the suggestion in a remarkable book by Robert Fisk that a near-mutiny among army officers in Ireland forced Wilson to change his policy and his speeches on the Protestant strike in 1974. Nor is there a word about the crowning horror of the 'final term': the Falkender honours list. That is the greatest pity of all. For nothing speaks more graphically about the social democratic career of Harold Wilson, who won so many hearts and votes with his constant castigation of 'people who make money rather than earn it', than his ennoblement on his resignation of a gaggle of television tycoons, financiers, commodity speculators, landlords and diamond merchants. Nothing, that is, except perhaps that in his autohagiography he has not a word for any of them. No, not even for his own Rasputine, the Lady Falkender.

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Patricia Hewitt

The Second Sex

Women in the House: a Study of Women Members of Parliament by ELIZABETH VALLANCE *Athlone* £9.50

Women in the House is a timely reminder, in the first year of the United Kingdom's first woman Prime Minister, that it is only 51 years since women got the vote, and that, in the House of Commons, they still hold less than five per cent of the seats. As Elizabeth Vallance points out, women's achievements in national politics have had no cumulative effect. There has been no steady invasion of women into the House or the Cabinet. Not only are there fewer women MPs now – 19 since the May election – than in 1950 when 21 were returned, but there are only a handful more now than in 1929, when the first election after the full enfranchisement of women produced 14 women MPs.

It was significant that the women's movement which had struggled for the vote produced none of the early women MPs. Countess Markievicz, who never took her seat, had been condemned to death for her involvement in the Easter Rising. Lady Astor, the first woman MP to take her seat, inherited it from her husband, as did the next two women MPs and many others who have followed. Most women MPs resolutely define themselves as 'MPs who happen to be women' and have often been careful to avoid identification with 'women's issues'. Nonetheless, as Ms Vallance's study of women MPs' participation in debates shows, women in the House have regularly pressed issues of vital concern to the women outside – women's employment during the war, discrimination in the social security system, child care facilities. But it is only very recently that a number of women MPs, by no means all of them feminists, have come together in the House as, in effect, a caucus to organise on issues such as abortion.

Perhaps because the book was completed before the 1979 election (although a postscript provides information on the number of women candidates and MPs), Ms Vallance underestimates the shakiness of the advances which have been made. Public spending cuts, particularly on child care; suggestions that unemployment (and delinquency) will be 'reduced' if only women would stay home; repeated attacks on abortion rights, which may yet have some success; the preposterous proposal, in the Conservative Party Manifesto, to forbid the foreign husbands of British women from living in this country . . . such developments hardly confirm Ms Vallance's conclusion that 'the attitudes of House and parties to women are in the end reflections of the attitudes, the self-confidence and persistence of women themselves'.

The main problem raised by Ms Vallance is why there aren't more women in national politics. Indeed, there is the same curious absence in her study as in the House of Commons – the women who haven't made it. I longed for more interviews with the women candidates in hopeless seats, the women who failed to get shortlisted, the women active in constituencies who might, if things were different, come forward as MPs, to complement the thorough interviews with the women who are there. Women MPs, not surprisingly, insist that they are not discriminated against. The facts suggest otherwise. More women were nominated in 1979 than ever before – 206 – but achieved the smallest return in nearly 30 years. In the October 1974 election, a woman candidate had a 6:1 chance of being elected. A male candidate's chances were nearly twice as high: 3.7:1. More women are being selected, but all too often for unwinnable seats. In most marginal and safe seats – despite the success of many women who have been returned in such seats – most selection conferences appear to prefer a youngish, white, middle-class, married male.

Practical difficulties, of course, there are. It is particularly difficult for a woman to present herself, over and over again, to the selection conferences of ward parties and affiliates; to contemplate the reorganisation of her own and probably her family's life which would follow on selection and election; to cope with the hours of a House geared to moonlighting barristers. Such problems also affect working-class men, of whom fewer are returned each Parliament. But they at least have a route to Parliament through trade union sponsorship – a route virtually closed to women who represented only three out of 100 names on the A-list of union-sponsored candidates in 1977.

The most challenging section of Ms Vallance's book is her analysis of women's position in the Parliaments of other Western European countries, from which she concludes that a system of proportional representation, as in West Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and the Scandinavian countries, produces far higher levels of female participation. Indeed, Finland in 1907 elected a Parliament with 9.5 per cent women MPs – a figure double that ever achieved in Britain – and by 1975 nearly one-quarter of Finnish MPs were women. Her strongest argument is that the existence of PR, and particularly of a party list system, gives the political parties a positive incentive to include candidates who are women, or candidates drawn from ethnic or other minorities, in order to achieve the broadest possible appeal. PR does not, of course, of itself produce more women MPs but, Ms Vallance argues, makes it possible for women to come forward rapidly, as in Italy, once the growth of a national women's movement leads to demands for parliamentary representation. Nonetheless, Ms Vallance concludes that outside Scandinavia 'the pattern of women's political representation is, at best, erratic'; indeed, the climate of legal and political equality, officially approved, may be at least as important a factor in the success of Scandinavian women as the electoral system.

It would be tragic if women's participation in the House of Commons had to depend on the debate over electoral reform. It is a pity that Ms Vallance does not spend more time considering the possibility of increasing the number of women MPs by positive action within the political parties – not a quota system, but a positive campaign to encourage women candidates to come forward, and constituency parties and trades unions to adopt them for winnable seats.

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Children at work
Although child labour in the classic sense of the mass exploitation of children in mines and factories has become an evil of the past, child labour itself remains a widespread and persistent phenomenon. This ILO contribution to the International Year of the Child looks into the problem of child labour in various parts of the world. It is neither over-technical, nor exhaustive; its basic purpose is to discuss the problem in everyday language, to analyse its causes and to put forward possible solutions.
ISBN 92-2-102072-X (limp cover) £5.65
ISBN 92-2-102165-3 (hard cover) £8.15

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ART BOOKS

John Spurling

The Blue Window

Matisse by LAWRENCE GOWING *Thames & Hudson* £5.95 and £2.95
Picasso: The Cubist Years 1907-16 by PIERRE DAIX & JOAN ROSSELET *Thames & Hudson* £60
Picasso by DOMENICO PORZIO & MARCO VALSECCHI *Secker* £12.50 and £6.95
Modern Art 1884-1914 by JEAN-LUC DAVAL *Skira/Macmillan* £35

Art was never the same again after the Ingres retrospective at the Salon d'Automne of 1905. It included the *Bain Turc*, that unforgettable mass of heaving nudes in luxurious posses. Matisse and Picasso, who were introduced to each other for the first time that winter by Gertude and Leo Stein, both saw the painting and both set to work borrowing from it. Matisse's version, which also borrowed from Cézanne's *Three Bathers*, was shown at the Salon des Indépendants in 1906. *Bonheur de vivre*, a radiant, Arcadian scene, achieved for the first time what Matisse was after all his life: 'nothing less,' as Lawrence Gowing writes in his *Matisse*, 'than the independent, abstract re-creation of ideal conditions of existence – states of visible perfection from which the least possibility of frustration was eliminated'. Picasso's version took longer. He was wrestling not only with the *Bain Turc* and Cézanne's *Three Bathers* (owned, incidentally, by Matisse), but with the fresh stimulus of an exhibition of primitive Iberian sculptures at the Louvre. Seeing *Bonheur de vivre* and recognising that Matisse was now definitely out in front, Picasso made Matisse's idealised world as much the object of his attack as Ingres's, and by the time he completed his brothel scene, *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon*, in 1907 it was in every way (subject, style, setting and feeling) the most violent possible antithesis to *Bonheur de vivre.*

There are 46 extant studies for *Les Demoiselles*, all reproduced, catalogued and discussed among the 893 works covered by Pierre Daix's and Joan Rosselet's mighty *catalogue raisonné* of *Picasso: The Cubist Years 1907-16.* The approaches to Cubism are heavily mined and many wounding explosions are to be heard as previous scholars in the field are shown to have taken up false positions. M. Daix is especially concerned to clear up the question of the influence of African art. It may have been Matisse who first introduced Picasso to African art, via the Trocadéro ethnographic museum, but its influence came in after *Les Demoiselles*, whose primitive element was solely Iberian.

Matisse had delivered another body blow to his would-be rival in the very year the avant-garde was reeling from its first sight of *Les Demoiselles*. *Nu bleu*, shown at the Salon des Indépendants of 1907, is a developed version of one of the central figures from *Bonheur de vivre* and is Matisse's first mature discovery of how to re-create the human body in his own visual, rhythmic terms, combining sculptures as a relief from and a help towards painting and he had found this freedom to reshape the body to his own requirements from modelling a figure in clay which then fell to pieces. M. Daix, incidentally, seems to think this sculpture was copied from the painting, but I follow Professor Gowing's account. The outcome, at any rate, was predictable. Picasso painted *his* version of *Nu bleu*, a standing figure instead of a reclining one – as *Les Demoiselles* had been threateningly vertical instead of, like *Bonheur de vivre*, calmly horizontal, but in substantially the same pose, a savage, spiky image, glaringly yellow, bound into a restless pattern of knife-edged triangular shapes and with heavy hatching in the African manner. It was called *Nude with Drapery*.

It is perhaps M. Daix's Gallic combativeness which gives this period its strong flavour of the prize fight, but it certainly makes for a gripping tale and probably reflects Picasso's own feelings accurately enough, since much of M. Daix's fresh information comes directly from him. Heading this close investigation, study by study, of the sources of *Les Demoiselles* and *Nude with Drapery*, as well as the later Cubist works and the *papiers collés*, is as near as one can get to standing at the painter's elbow. There is the same difference from reading a popular, generalised account of the life and work such as the *Picasso*, edited by Domenico Porzio and Marco Valsecchi as there is between the coloured illustrations to the two books. *Picasso* has 164, whereas the *catalogue raisonné* has only 52, but if one wishes to understand Picasso's work instead of merely being introduced to it, the sharpness of M. Daix's text and the quality of his reproductions are indispensable.

One may raise one's eyebrows at his large claim that on the basis of his borrowing from primitive art and his partial rejection of Renaissance tradition Picasso was 'a liquidator of privilege and prejudice, of European provincialism, of Euro-centric attitudes', but to be brought so close to the processes of thought of a great discoverer in the crucial period of his career is to be given the instrument for testing that claim. What if he was, after all, only the exploiter of other men's discoveries – Cézanne's space, Gauguin's primitivism, Matisse's and Derain's development of Cézannism, Braque's Cubism and *papiers collés?* His fierce ambition and relentless push transformed the beginnings made by these more cautious explorers into inroads which opened up whole territories of pictorial expression.

Although Matisse brought out the bull in Picasso, he never really entered the ring himself. He was not the sort of man to engage in competition with other artists, since he was entirely turned in on himself. The search for undisturbed completeness and the need to shut out life's fragmented anxiety were what drove him. Picasso's father was a painter and when his son was 14 handed over his own paints and brushes to the triumphant prodigy. Matisse was already 20 and working as a lawyer's clerk when he began painting: 'I felt transported into a kind of paradise . . .In everyday life I was usually bored and vexed by the things that people were always telling me I must do. Starting to paint I felt gloriously free, quiet and alone.' Picasso saw him as a rival for the inheritance of Cézanne's treatment of forms in space and as an escapist and idealist in a world which needed taking by the throat. He was both, but he was also the first great 20th-century master of colour, an inheritance from the Impressionists and Gauguin which Picasso never disputed with him.

Professor Gowing's contribution to 'The World of Art Library' is of course intended as a general introduction to Matisse's art and its illustrations are no more than tokens or postcard reminders of the paintings; nevertheless the clarity and painterly descriptiveness of the text make up for the lack of detail. When Gowing asks 'Can anyone forget when he first became aware of *La fenetre bleue*?' he sounds momentarily like the caricature of a connoisseur, but the following passage is a condensed illumination of Matisse's genius almost worthy of Proust's insights into painting:

> In a moment one knew one of the simplest and most radiant ideas in the whole of art, the idea that the shapes of things are immaterial except as fantastic vessels – a dish, a vase, a pot like a chalice, a tree like a bunch of balloons – to contain the airy brightness of the world. The blue fills them. They are gently inflated and rounded by the pressure. The common colour presses outward with a persistent pulse.

It is a fine piece of dramatic irony that after the first world war, when Picasso had declined into a witty but facile parodist of his own and other people's work, including Matisse's Arcadias, Matisse should have found in *papiers collés*, long discarded by Picasso, the climax of his own vision, creating abstractions of rhythm and colour which remain as haunting to our age as Cézanne's late works to the age dominated by Picasso.

The confused arrival of that age, roughly 1880 to 1914, the period covered by the exhibition of Post-Impressionism at the RA, which I shall review next week, is charted in a great slab of a book, with a reproduction of *Les Demoiselles* on the dust-jacket. Jean-Luc Daval's *Modern Art* is an odd publication, popular in layout and in the brevity of its judgments, but priced by the size and quality of its illustrations outside its own market and amounting to a kind of colour supplement for millionaires. Treatment of almost all the artistic developments of the time does not extend to Vorticism and the only English artist it mentions is Beardsley; nor does it at any point admit the term 'Post-Impressionism', which was of course an English coinage but if one can stomach its Paris-centred view of the world (legitimate perhaps in art, though not necessarily for the scientific, social and political trends which it also touches on), it makes stimulating reading. Indeed it is less an art-book than an epic, in which the individual quests of the heroes and the illustrations which stand for their deeds thread through a grand saga of unfolding freedom. It ends rather gloomily, as sagas tend to, with Duchamp's notorious urinal. But what else could an ambitious champion do just then if he wanted to get into the ring with Picasso? Matisse was well out of it

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Bevis Hillier

Smart Art

Super Realism by EDWARD LUCIE-SMITH *Phaidon* £5.95

A man was up before a judge for molesting small girls. His previous conviction was for molesting small boys. Sentencing him, the judge commented, 'Well, at least this is a step in the right direction.' It is in that sense that I think super-realism is a step in the right direction for art. It is lamentable, but not quite so lamentable as what it replaced.

Common sense should tell us that there is something grotesque about super-realism. It is preposterous that an artist should sit down to paint something which, when finished, is indistinguishable from a colour photograph. It is a feat of amazing but useless virtuosity, like engraving the Lord's Prayer on a pin head. But even this boastful display of technique, smart and soulless as a Sandhurst passing-out parade, is preferable to the vapid abstract canvases of Rothko, the geometric cartwheels of Bridget Riley, or the toothpaste-tube squirtings of Jackson Pollock.

Edward Lucie-Smith rightly relates super-realism to 'conceptual art': the art which sets out to woo us, not by the immediate, retinal impression made by a work of art and the message that it automatically sends to the brain, but by the 'concept' which, as we may or may not be clever enough to divine, lies behind the work of art. Unfortunately there are two things wrong with conceptual art: first, that the concept could usually be better expressed in clear prose; and second, that the concept is usually a footling one anyway, not worth expressing in any medium, from concrete verse to mustard and cress planted in patterns.

How are we to interpret super-realism? I would say it is the natural corrective phase art has to go through after abstraction to regain its equilibrium: just as the novel had to pass through a period of almost total pornography after prudishness, or women have to make exaggerated claims about female superiority before taking their proper place with men in society.

Lucie-Smith's mind is so fertile that I have sometimes felt he could work out a justification for any form of art. If you pinned a mouldering Camembert cheese to a dart board and exhibited it in a gallery, Lucie-Smith would be ready with a plausible and enjoyably written explanation of 'comestible conceptualism' or 'dart art'. He is a brilliant counsel for the defence, with a lot of rather shady clients. One can see the fun of it for him. It is more of a challenge to justify a photographic painting of a bathroom in acrylic by Douglas Bond than to tell us why we should admire Michelangelo.

But for once, in this book, Lucie-Smith seems stumped. I suspect his heart is not really in it. On his first page he quotes a nice catechism of justifications for super-realism: it reminds us 'of the beautiful gifts we are negligently squandering' (Cindy Nemser); it offers 'a universe of phenomena from which all traces of the numinous have been drained' (H. R. Raymond); it 'seeks not to create an image of man, but to clarify an image of all that is not man' (Linda Chase) through its point-for-point precision 'the actual is portrayed as being so real that it doesn't exist' (Gerrit Henry). Clever stuff (and ripe for Pseuds' Corner); but when Lucie-Smith himself sums up, at the end of the book, all he can manage is this:

> If Super Realist painting and sculpture need a justification other than the pleasure they are often capable of giving thanks to their own sheer professionalism, it is that they consistently reflect – and, despite the artists' protestations, frequently interpret – important aspects of our society which have never before found a place in art.

When Degas saw the first daguerrotype, he said 'From today, painting is dead'. These slick, gelatinous attempts to rival the camera in everything but instantaneousness might convince you he was right. Some of the works, notably Mendenhall's, Ester's and Cottingham's, do transcend mere photographic precision – super-super-realism, as one might say. But to me, the main justification for super-realism is to give verisimilitude to a surrealist fantasy, as in Dali's best works. It should be a means to an end, not an end in itself.

An illustration from Ralph Steadman's **Sigmund Freud** *Paddington Press* £8.95

Richard Cork

Upstaging Events

Joseph Beuys by CAROLINE TISDALL *Thames & Hudson* £18

I shall never forget discovering how Joseph Beuys exerts his effortless charismatic hold over people. It took place in the summer of 1977, during a press conference at Kassel to inaugurate the latest Documenta, West Germany's most prestigious modern art exhibition. The hall was crowded, and the stifling air filled with aggressive questions. But all hostilities were suddenly stilled when a gaunt figure wearing a battered felt hat came in. The world's press converged on him, cameras whirring frenetically. But he simply stood there. The entire launching of Documenta had been brought to a halt by the advent of Joseph Beuys.

Beuys has cultivated his mesmerising public

WILLIAM BURROUGHS

is the most controversial living American novelist. *Ah Pook Is Here* (£5.95) combines his most recent fictional texts, diving again into the special world of powermania, death rituals, time changes and linguistic experiment that Burroughs' readers expect. Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*: *The Years of Apprenticeship* is now complete with the appearance of Volume 3 (£5.95 or £17.85 the set) in the new translation by H. M. Waidson. *Tragedy & Social Evolution* by Eva Figes (£2.95), a feminist look at primitive death rituals and their relationship to classical tragedy on stage is now a paperback. The new *Gambit* is a double issue with complete coverage of contemporary Polish theatre, containing three plays, many illustrations and surveys (£3.00).

NUCLEAR ACCIDENTS

threaten us daily. Robert Jungk's *The Nuclear State* (2.95) denounces the lies of the nuclear establishment, assesses the real dangers to our health, future and a democratic society. Michele Wallace's *Black Macho*, the first black feminist attack on the black male is historically fascinating, shockingly frank and lucidly written (£2.50). Simone Benmussa has brilliantly directed two plays in London, her own *Albert Nobbs* and Cixous's *Portrait of Dora*, now combined in one volume *Benmussa Presents* (£6.95 and £2.95). New from Samuel Beckett: *All Strange Away* (£4.50). *Journal of Beckett Studies* No. 4 now available (£3.00). Outstanding reviews are greeting P. J. Kavanagh's poetic nature novel *People and Weather* (£2.50).

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persona as a serious and deliberate extension of the resources an artist can employ, taking his own identity as sculptor and widening it out to the point where art and life are almost indistinguishable. His 'actions', performed on street-corners as readily as in galleries, are the ultimate extension of a working philosophy which started with more orthodox activities, like drawing or the making of sculptural objects. Beuys calls this multi-faceted programme Social Sculpture, and refuses to place any arbitrary restrictions on the forms art can take.

Caroline Tisdall's lucid book, with its wealth of photographic and written testaments from eye-witnesses of his more transitory activities, offers the most rounded picture of Beuys we are likely to get for many years. The immense range of his approaches to Social Sculpture is clarified by her sensible division of the book into 24 sections. Each one takes its cue from a sculpture and then widens the discussion out, so that her description of the sections as 'stations on a journey' becomes very apt. Beuys's massive reputation in Europe and America must owe much to his insistence that the role of what we call 'art' should change to meet the requirements of a changing society. A democratic socialist with anarchist leanings, he believes artists should develop ways of working which impinge on people's lives at as many junctures as possible. And he puts this belief into tireless practice, making art in a multitude of contexts, and helping to form directly political bodies like the German Student Party. In West Germany his doings are recorded so avidly by the media that he is able to upstage events as weighty as Documenta simply by being there. But Beuys has always retained a highly developed sense of his own independent imagination, so that the political is shaped and tempered by the personal throughout his work.

Just how personal can be gauged by Tisdall's opening biographical section, stressing the lasting influence of his native district, centred on the West German town of Cleves, and his experience as a Nazi combat pilot during the war. Seriously injured five times, Beuys only fully recovered from the traumatic experience in 1958. But one event during the war had a beneficent effect, and its ripples continue even now to spread into every corner of his art. In 1943 the Ju-87 Beuys was flying received a direct hit from Russian flak and crash-landed in a Crimean snowstorm. He was completely buried in the snow, and would have died but for some nomadic Tartars who discovered him days later. Beuys's own recollection of his rescue is filled with references to the life-giving materials which permeate his subsequent work:

> I remember voices saying 'Voda' ('Water'), then the felt of their tents, and the dense pungent smell of cheese, fat and milk. They covered my body in fat to help it regenerate warmth, and wrapped it in felt as an insulator to keep the warmth in.

So many strands in Beuys's art emanate from this Lazarus-like rebirth that it can be seen as the most determining event of his life. His interest in ritual, in felt and fat as two of the primary elements of his art, and in the whole notion of sculpture as an affirmative activity which could help to heal our post-war wounds, all relate back to his miraculous return from death on the Steppes. And the most impressive Beuys work I have ever seen – a haunting installation at the 1976 Venice Biennale, *Tram Stop* – likewise draws on his early memories to make a statement far wider than autobiography. Its principal parts were the upright barrel of a field cannon and four 17th-century mortar bombs,

It conveyed a double meaning, partly mourning the victims of weaponry, partly implying that somehow the mouth of war must be stopped. The ambiguities contained in this elegiac sculpture, so full of pain and yet ultimately holding out hope, lie at the very centre of Beuys's art.

Peter Sherwood

Visual Feast

Hungarian Folk Art by TAMÁS HOFER & EDIT FÉL *Oxford* £12.50

Many visitors to Hungary looking for an unusual and attractive souvenir are tempted by blouses, cushion covers, or table linen richly embroidered with the bold colours of the flower-pattern known as 'Matyó'; the many 'cottage industry' shops have a thriving tourist trade and this typically Hungarian design may now be seen almost anywhere in the world. But Hungarian folk art has a great deal more to offer, as this beautifully-produced and well translated book illustrates, with over 600 excellent photographs of buildings, furniture, clothes, and other objects chosen from the finest public and private collections.

Only 40 years ago (and there are few items here more recent than this) the majority of the Hungarian population still worked on the land. This book documents their way of life and their delight in the creation of beautiful things. There are interiors of cottages, with finely-carved chairs and benches, bridal chests, cupboards and mirrors. Many smaller items of a personal nature are also shown: richly-decorated razor-cases, powder-flasks, drinking-horns, matchboxes, tobacco-holders (of lead-glazed pottery, in the shape of a human head), mirror-cases with sealing-wax inlay (a Hungarian speciality), and the tops of bagpipes (again in the shape of a human or animal head). Kitchens were well furnished: there are wicker-baskets, gourds, salt-cellars (one set in the shape of rams), wooden and pottery boards for noodle-making, spice boxes, wine-jugs, book-shaped brandy-flasks, and dishes of every kind. The woman's lot is also recalled by washing-bats, mangling-boards, distaffs, shuttles, a pottery sewing-basket, and 'pins for fastening the hemp to the distaff', usually in the shape of a flower. The importance of religion is clear from the churches, church-interiors (typically with painted, wood-panelled ceilings), wooden graveposts (stone was too expensive), wayside crosses and statues, and a fine bench from a windmill carved with a chalice and two candlesticks. And finally there are 150 pictures of Hungarian costume and embroidery: dazzling combinations of materials, designs and colours (there are 40 mounted colour plates). Every item illustrated – from church-ceiling to hoe-scraper – is painted, sculpted, carved, engraved, inlaid or embroidered with an astonishing variety of shapes, designs, figures, scenes and mottoes; a rare visual feast.

It is, however, worth pointing out that the title makes a greater claim than would, say, *Folk Art of Hungary*, and to be fair the illustrations do include over 100 items originating from what are now the Hungarian-speaking areas of Rumania, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. But while the worthy scholarly introduction covers the aesthetic and ethnographic ground, it assumes a rather detailed geographical and historical knowledge of this part of Europe from readers in a country where a national daily confused Budapest and Bucharest on its front page last year, and where quite a few people think Transylvania is some horror-film fairyland. There are no maps, no glosses for many terms in the captions to Transylvanian material, and, most seriously, no real discussion is offered of the importance of Transylvania as the region where the most ancient motifs and techniques of Hungarian folk art have been best preserved; consequently, some outstanding material, too, is missed (the magnificent carved gates of Northern and Eastern Transylvania, for example).

Despite this missed opportunity this book cannot fail to delight anyone who cares about the art of the people. Make sure your coffee-table can take the weight and buy it.

Arthur Marshall

Whiskers

Queen Victoria's Sketchbook by MARINA WARNER *Macmillan* £8.95

Grouse and grumble as she might and so constantly did about her allegedly sad lot, Queen Victoria did have, for much of her life, two great solaces additional to her happy marriage and Albert's obviously indefatigable marital attentions. One of them was recently discovered to have been the theatre (three visits a week was quite normal). And now we find from Marina Warner's charming and beautifully produced book that, from 1827 to 1890, she ceaselessly sketched, painted and etched. It was already vaguely known that she dabbled in such things, but this is no dabbler at work and the results, many of them reproduced here, fill over fifty sketchbooks and albums. 'She has been until now,' Miss Warner writes, 'an unknown example of a marvellous and extinct breed: the Victorian amateur watercolourist.'

Against a thinly outlined but necessary historical background, Miss Warner details the artistic progress. At the age of eight, bi-weekly and hour-long painting lessons began, and continued for nine years, with Richard Westall, R.A. ('very gentlemanly and extremely punctual'), lessons which brought much happiness into that muted childhood: and, much later in life, Landseer was to lend a tutorial hand. The diarist Greville, often so prone to take a dreary view of things, thought the Princess 'a short, vulgar looking child' and a self-portrait at the age of 13 shows a serious and tight-lipped girl already under considerable strain.

Like many another adolescent, Victoria had her youthful crushes and combining them with

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her love of ballet and opera, her sketchbooks explode with drawings and watercolours of her two heroines, the dancer Taglioni and the singer Grisi. And then along came the crown and, with it and perhaps best of all, Lord Melbourne, who figures frequently, usually in colour, that fascinating and enigmatic man who disliked all birdsong save the cawing of rooks and who by then was so firmly entrenched in her affections that, at her Coronation, Victoria could put up with him munching sandwiches and swigging wine from off the altar in St Edward's chapel and whom she subsequently and lovingly painted struggling along with the Sword of State ('excessively heavy').

Melbourne, like many Victorian men, had whiskers and there is no doubt that, as a manly attribute, the Queen was all her life rather a one for whiskers, preferably blond. They bristle splendidly in her sketches of Count Walfstein and Prince Esterhazy, while the exiled Duke of Brunswick looks like a villain in a melodrama. Albert filled the bill in this respect ('quite charming . . . delicate moustachios and slight whiskers') and, later, Napoleon III's goatee merited an especially careful study in profile. The bearded Indian 'Munshi', her servant, rates an admiring portrait and there are a number of John Brown ('Johnnie' to her, apparently). And oh the excitements of early married life. 'I went in and saw him shave, a great delight to me'. Whiskers again, you see.

It is in her quick little pen-and-ink studies that this royal artist is at her best. The rather formal set-pieces of Scottish lochs and glens, Swiss mountains, charades at Chatsworth (she could never manage either legs or feet), and the environs of Balmoral (painted, a morbid note adds, 'in 1862, the first year of my misery') are too heavy by half, though sometimes she gets it right – there is a pleasing view of Torquay from the royal yacht. But the early and inch-long likenesses of the ponies that she daily rode succeed excellently, as do the multitudinous ones of her growing family and especially those of the adored eldest girl, the Princess Royal (known as 'Pussy' at home) in her bath and taking her bottle. It is strange that the Queen painted Albert hardly at all, and only once in the bosom of his family. She was perhaps aware that her purely amateur powers, and beyond a certain point they progressed hardly at all, were inadequate to reproduce the one who to her eyes was such a paragon of masculine beauty.

Victoria was very skilful at catching a facial likeness, alarmingly so in two cases. By the age of nine the character of the future Edward VII was all too clear. He had started to refuse lessons from his tutor, and to spit and scowl, and although his mother disliked his knock-knees and his drooping Hanoverian nose, she dutifully got out her painting materials and, with gloomy relish, preserved for posterity little Bertie's appallingly sulky and disgruntled face. Her quick pencil drawing of her grandson, William of Prussia, at about the age of four really sends a shiver down the spine. His grandmother recorded the fact that the other children 'are rather afraid of him as he is so violent'. There he arrogantly stands. Clap those upturned moustaches on him and sit him on a horse and he is instantly recognisable as the Kaiser, the vain and determined architect of many of our present ills and who, when he won, was going to hang us all from lamp-posts.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Ronald Hayman

Theatrum Mundi

Erwin Piscator *Riverside Studios*

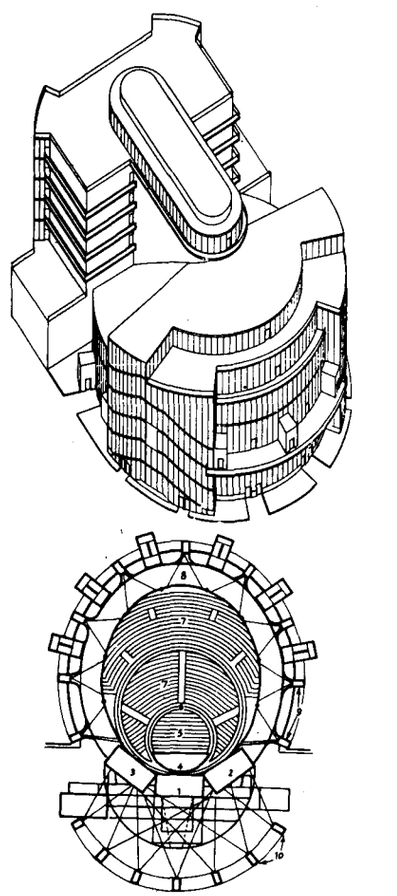
Erwin Piscator deserves to be very much better known than he is: he was the father of the political theatre we have today and the originator of the 'Epic Theatre' we think of as Brechtian.

'The war was my teacher,' he used to say. Traumatised by experiences in the trenches of the first world war, he became the implacable enemy of the capitalism he saw as its fundamental cause. His early productions were aimed negatively at the destruction of bourgeois art, and positively at the 'unification of the rising class in a common attitude of mind'. His stylistic and technical innovations emerged directly out of his convictions. He wanted to shift the theatre away from its indulgent preoccupation with personality and private life, to find a new language of images that would speak directly to a new unsophisticated public.

Though he failed to attract a working-class audience, he succeeded in minting a new theatrical vocabulary. To disseminate information, to spread enlightenment and to inculcate the desire for social change he introduced techniques of presenting contemporary history panoramically. Many of the anti-illusionist devices that have become commonplace grew out of his experiments. Rejecting painted backgrounds, he used theatre space architecturally. Instead of encouraging the audience to forget it was inside a theatre, he drew attention to the fact. To introduce objective documentation he used the detached commentator and filmic projections. Sometimes he exposed the ironic discrepancy between the personal and the historical viewpoints by means of complex theatrical counterpoint. On the rotating hemispherical set that Traugott Müller designed for his 1927 production of *Rasputin,* an obsequious minister reassured the Tsarina that everything was going to be all right, while a list of lost battles was projected on to a screen higher than the acting space, above which a film sequence was projected showing her death in the shooting at Tsarskoye Selo.

Piscator wanted a functional theatre that could speak not just through the actor's mouth but through each of its component parts. His elaborate technology, his lifts, his treadmills and his conveyor belts, his involved lighting plots, his projections of gigantic blow-ups of the human face all belong to this Gargantuan effort to integrate history into the scenic background and the scenic background into the foreground action. A Calvinist who lost his God in the trenches, a modernist who reverted to the medieval idea of *theatrum mundi*, he committed himself totally to theatre, and approximated more closely than any of his contemporaries to total theatre. Two of the most impressive exhibits in the Piscator exhibition on view at the Riverside Studios are a model of this hemispherical set – the point of the shape is to reinforce the point that such events as these shape our experience of the world – and a model illustrating the never-realised 'total theatre' project on which Piscator collaborated with Gropius in 1927, five years before Vakhtangov and Mikhail Barkhin worked under Meyerhold's supervision on the designs for his similar theatre.

Gropius and Piscator eliminated the stratification of the audience into tiers, creating a vast bank of 2,000 seats encircling the forestage, which was situated on a huge turntable, where the remaining space could be used for seats or could be cleared to form a mobile arena stage, as could the larger adjacent area of seating, carrying the inner turntable to the centre of the auditorium. The whole space was surmounted with a vast geodesic scaffolding. If Piscator's productions had brought every element in the acting area to life, Gropius's designs would have involved the auditorium in Piscatorial mobility, while the acting area could have been arranged as a proscenium stage, triple proscenium stage, thrust stage or arena stage – a design that strikingly prefigures contemporary architectural flexibility in the theatre.



Gropius's Total Theatre designed for the Piscatorbühne

Both these models were built in 1971 by

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Werner Schwenke with students of the Schiller College, Berlin. The exhibition also includes four other large scale models they built in 1971-3 to reproduce Piscator's sets. His first production at his own theatre in Nollendorfplatz, Berlin, in September 1927 was Ernst Toller's *Hoppla We Are Alive!*, designed by Traugott Müller with two storeys of steel scaffolding on either side of the main acting area, and a photographic background.

No exhibition can possibly convey the full flavour of a director's work in the theatre, but in collecting and arranging the 967 items on show, Professor Walter Huder, the director of archives in Berlin's Akademie der Künste, has made both an important statement about Piscator and an important contribution towards the understanding of his work. Static though they unfortunately are, the Schwenke models highlight the architectural element in Piscator's genius, while four smaller illuminated models in glass cases give an impression of four other productions, including *The Adventures of the Good Soldier Schwejk* adapted from Jaroslav Hasek's novel by Max Brod and Hans Reimann, with sets and costumes by Georg Grosz.

This production gave Brecht the idea that culminated in his play *Schweyk in the Second World War,* and of all his borrowings from Piscator, this was the most damaging: in 1943 it precluded the possibility of Piscator's directing the old adaptation for the Theatre Guild in New York, when he badly needed a follow-up for his 1942 production of *War and Peace*, which he had adapted with Alfred Neumann. Though he used to say 'Brecht is my brother', he had the right to complain as he did in his diary (an undated entry about January 1956) that Brecht 'has taken over my legacy – by means that are not altogether fair'. According to his widow, Maria Ley Piscator, formerly a ballerina, he complained about Brecht only rarely, but the diary entry for 2 November 1955 calls his second production of *Mutter Courage* 'Schweik's anabasis, dragged out interminably'.

As John Willett has pointed out in *The Theatre of Erwin Piscator*, Brecht's use of the revolving stage for *Mutter Courage* to draw her wagon probably derives from Piscator's treadmill stage, and Brecht's half-curtain from Piscator's projections. Brecht accoladed him as 'one of the greatest theatre men of all time', but though he recognised Brecht, after his death, as 'the greater one after all . . .the only man who, through his art, managed to represent Germany during its division', he never directed any of Brecht's plays while he was alive, and ultimately he regarded Brecht's theatre as insufficiently political, insufficiently panoramic, too dependent on individual lives and individual details.

The exhibition continues at the Riverside Studios, Crisp Road, W6, until 13 December, and side by side with it three events are being arranged by the Goethe Institute. Piscator's only film, The Revolt of the Fishermen of Santa Barbara, *which was made over a four year period (1932-6) in the Soviet Union, will be shown at the Goethe Institute, 51 Prince's Gate, SW7 on 26 November and 3 December at 7.30. On 28 November at 8.0 Professor Leopold Lindtberg, who was a member of the Theatre Studio that Piscator ran in New York from 1938 till 1951, will lecture at the Institute on Piscator's work. And on 11 December at six o'clock John Willett will chair a discussion at Riverside on Piscator's work and influence with panellists including Rolf Hochhuth and Elaine Stritch, another ex-member.*

Music

Peter Porter

Supreme Circle

The Operas of Benjamin Britten — edited by David Herbert *Hamish Hamilton* £30

The ideal reader of this book should be able to start with the words given by Auden to the Chorus of Old Trees in *Paul Bunyan* and go right through the texts of the further 15 works to 'Tadziu', the dying Aschenbach's last word in *Death in Venice,* and hear Britten's music in his mind's ear at every stage on the way. That is the only *raison d'être* for printing libretti outside the scores. They should never be read as works of literature, however distinguished their authors. I can report that I traversed these 300 close-packed pages and it was only in some passages from *The Prodigal Son*, *The Golden Vanity,* and *Owen Wingrave,* that I couldn't conjure up the vocal line with which Britten clothed the words. This is not, of course, a tribute to my memory, but to Britten's genius.

Nothing separates the born vocal composer from the willed one more obviously than his ability to make his settings memorable. (I mean memorable to audiences: singers can learn anything). It is possible to write beautiful, sensual and artistically inventive music for operas which nevertheless remains unmemorable, unmagical, and essentially undramatic. The 20th century is littered with examples of technically brilliant operas ruined by their composers' vocal writing – the words are simply corpsed by their settings. Nor is this infrequent in works from the past, which are still in the modern repertory, or held up for admiration in histories of opera – Cavalli, anything by Lully, some of Handel, Weber, early Wagner and on to *Pelléas et Mélisande.*

Britten's operas belong to that supreme circle which is not measured just by musical genius but by absolute standards of memorability and dramatic force, a circle which is dominated by Mozart and Verdi, but includes very disparate works from both ends of the scale of sublimity – Puccini and Rossini as well as Wagner and Beethoven.

In one sense, modern operas such as Britten's have to be even more memorable than opera seria or buffa, since audiences today will not accept the convention of *recitativo secco.* Even Mozart falls back on traditional formulas for most of his secco recitatives. You feel an immediate quickening of interest when the orchestra enters in a recitative, and the moments which strike at your memory in the plain recitatives of *Figaro* or *Cosi Fan Tutte* are few. For some reason *Don Giovanni* is different: although the traditional cadences and formulae are still there, Mozart writes very dashing and memorable secco recitatives in this opera. Britten's solution to the recitative problem is the same as Purcell's – he finds pungent musical phrases which are melodies in themselves, but dramatically condensed ones. From the moment Lawyer Swallow begins his examination of Peter Grimes in the prologue of that opera until Aschenbach's semi-improvised musings in *Death of Venice*, Britten's handling of the dry and factual material of recitative is unerring. It is at its height of memorability, perhaps, in *The Turn of the Screw*, but then many people would agree with Hans Keller, who states in his essay in this book, that the first of Britten's Henry James operas is probably his greatest operatic achievement.

What can one say about these libretti, if one attempts to judge their effectiveness as vehicles for conveying the composer's vision? Only, I suppose, that Britten has prejudged them for us by finding music for them. Libretti are seen to be good in the light of the music they evoke. Yet the Old Adam in us may prefer Da Ponte's words for Mozart to Schikaneder's, without our liking *Figaro* more than *Die Zauber flöte*, and so we may esteem some of the Britten texts more than others. Auden's words for *Paul Bunyan* are a little perverse, but so fine that one regrets that he and Britten never collaborated again. I am glad that Eric Crozier acknowledges the originality of Montagu Slater's libretto for *Peter Grimes.* The portraits of Borough folk in that opera are drawn with mastery and give Britten a wonderfully spacious canvas to paint on. Crozier's own work *(Albert Herring*, *The Little Sweep* and, with Forster, *Billy Budd)* is effective and well-made in the old craftsmanlike mode.

I have got into trouble in the NEW STATESMAN before for commenting adversely on Ronald Duncan's poetics in *The Rape of Lucretia*, and will confine myself here to disputing Hans Keller's remark that the younger generation of poets and poetry lovers adopts a different attitude towards Duncan's libretto than did the critics of its early performances. Duncan's fulsome style is even more out of favour among poets today. Myfanwy Piper's collaborations with Britten were especially close and rewarding. Seeing William Plomer's jocular words about the Waters of Babylon from *The Burning Fiery Furnace* written out as verse makes them oddly more attractive than they look in the score or sometimes sound in performance.

One notices recurrences in Britten's works which are like familiar presences – the rituals of good morning and good evening exchanged among his characters, the ariosi in praise of peace, and both straight and ironic use of the Benedicite. Of the preliminary essays, Keller's is the most audacious with its expected quota of insights, especially his insistence that Britten, like Mozart, does not weight his music towards the development section in the Haydn and Beethoven manner. Articles on the origins of the libretti and on producing the operas, by Crozier, Myfanwy Piper, Basil Coleman and Colin Graham are all worth reading, and only Andrew Porter's pieces on *Paul Bunyan* and *Death in Venice*, reprinted from the *New Yorker*, seem out of place. The book is finely adorned by photos of productions and coloured plates of sets and costumes, among which John Piper's backdrops for *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Ceri Richards's animal masks for *Noye's Fludde* are outstanding.

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Radio

Hilary Spurling

Game Pye

The Society of Authors/Pye Radio Awards were handed over last week at the Savoy in the shape of a dozen 'small statuettes symbolic of radio waves': a kind of non-committal contemporary equivalent of Eric Gill's naked Ariel, now nearly half a century old and still signalling his cranky cultural come-hither from high on the facade of Broadcasting House in Portland Place.

Of course a cast of a disc-jockey's earphone or a necklet of tiny perspex transistors would have made the same point, namely that you can have radio anywhere any time and all for the price of a battery which is more than can be said for most pleasures. But symbolic ariels and air waves lend tone to cheapness and availability. The Pye (formerly Imperial Tobacco) awards are in their fourth year, which makes them one year younger than commercial radio; and, though in theory the scheme covers the whole field of sound broadcasting, in practice it seems to have been conceived from the start as a means of keeping the classier end up.

This at least is presumably the view of the fair number of commercial stations who have persistently snubbed all attempts to persuade them to take part. Out of 35 entries in the three categories (there are 13 altogether) for which I was one of the judges, only two programmes were submitted by commercial stations. There were no commercial winners this year (in previous years there have been in all half a dozen, and two of those were Kenny Everett); and in the 'Best Community Programme' – the only category designed exclusively for commercial and BBC local stations – the judges made no award on the grounds that to pick the best of a mediocre bunch would simply bring the whole scheme into disrepute.

Snags like this inevitably raise questions about the nature and purpose of this prize-giving. In the first place the Pye awards are different from most of the autumn's crop of artistic prizes in that, if you win one, no money changes hands, nor will it sell any more of your books, put up your box office returns, have an noticeable effect on your audience ratings. People who put in for them do it, as Jane Austen said she wrote, only for fame – which makes it all the odder that the awards should be run along lines that come close to excluding precisely that area which has recently seen by far the most radical changes in radio.

Of the 13 Pye categories, there are by my reckoning only three ('Radio Personality', 'Sports Personality' and the unlucky community programmes) which are not more or less heavily biased in favour of the BBC's superior technical and financial resources. It is not simply that practically all the sections favour scripts over spontaneity (as any scheme organised by the Society of Authors naturally would do). What is wanting is any means of saluting those most un-BBC-like, devil-may-care, improvisatory virtues of flexibility, panache, willingness to experiment, take risks and cut losses which may flourish on even the humble phone-in.

A practical or even possible method of achieving either aim is admittedly hard to imagine offhand. The present system involves marshalling some 300 to 400 tapes of individual programmes together with 12 jurors arranged in relays of three (one writer from the Society of Authors, one radio critic, one member of the public) to listen to them. For anyone who (like Peter Cook's character in the dirty raincoat) would have been a judge if it wasn't for the Latin, this is an admirable way to spend a fortnight. Several of the winning programmes were not only outstanding in themselves but achieved unheard-of effects by means impossible in any medium save radio. Tom McGrath's play *The Hardman*, in Tom Kinnimont's electrifying production, was a case in point. So were *Come Unto These Yellow Sands*, Angela Carter's extraordinary feature programme about Richard Dadd the fairy painter, and John Theocharis's *Spring of Memory* (which won two of the three categories for which it was submitted), a strange, haunting, beautifully made account of Bill Morrison's return under hypnosis through childhood to infancy and the womb.

Productions of this calibre would have made themselves felt in any company. Others might have benefited from a careful study of form by all those officially empowered to make submissions, more especially by those heads of departments at the BBC whose attitude seems to have been cavalier to say the least. For instance, Geoffrey Perkins's *Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, which won the Comedy section (a notoriously soft option) last year, might have been well advised to stay put rather than chance its luck this year against decidedly stiffer competition in Original Drama (where the award went eventually to Shirley Gee's *Typhoid Mary* by a short head from John Arden's *Pearl*). Conversely, Comedy Scripts would have been just the place for Richard Usborne's *What Ho! Jeeves* (Wodehouse purists may cavil but this exquisite serialisation seemed to me if anything more subtly loopy than the original), a thoroughbred hopelessly outclassed alongside the serious heavies of Drama Adaptations.

It is perhaps worth mentioning that neither *The Hardman* nor Hugh Whitemore's *Stevie* was actually entered for this last category in which, as it turned out, they were winner and runner-up respectively. Slips of this sort were common enough in several categories to suggest a certain slackness, not to say downright indifference, on the part of BBC department heads who seem not only to have done those things which they ought not to have done (what, for instance, was a perfectly respectable episode from *Dr Finlay's Casebook* doing with Arden's furiously ambitious *Pearl* in Original Drama?) but – perhaps more serious – to have left undone those things which they ought to have done: why, since we are on the subject of drama, was Richard Wortley's justly celebrated production of Howard Brenton's *Epsom Down* not entered under Drama? And where was Paul Schofield in *Private Lives*, surely one of the most impressive and enchanting coups ever brought off by the BBC drama department?

The undoubted need for and benevolent influence of these radio awards go without saying though, as Ivy Compton-Burnett's characters frequently point out, it would be better if that sort of thing didn't have to.

Television

Julian Barnes

Fancy Flickers

For Jimmy Greaves, it was an overfamiliarity with the chianti; for Dave Watson, it was the decision of a kamikaze German forward to butt his fist. The experiences of British footballers on the continent have usually been short and sour. For 20 years they have swanked off in an electric storm of flashbulbs, only to stump back truculently after less than their contracted period; and, not coincidentally, for the same 20 years foreign styles of play have had so little influence on the average Football League clogger that when, last season, Tommy Smith kicked Ardiles out of a cup-tie and then dismissed him as a 'fancy flicker', no one seriously questioned the irony of his stance. Good old Tommy; what a real pro; guts in his shinpads; English First Division's still the best in the world; used to own the UEFA Cup; and so on. Yet by 1982, when the next World Cup is held, it will be 20 years since England reached the final rounds by virtue of their performance in the qualifying stages; so a persevering attempt by any one of our footballers to understand why the fancy flickers always end up with the silverware on *their* sideboards is to be applauded.

Kevin Keegan has stuck it out in Hamburg, and was able to report in *Brian Moore Meets Kevin Keegan* (LWT) that 'the grass is greener on the other side.' A personal portrait rather than a soccer essay (austerely, we weren't allowed to see our hero score until after the commercial break), it drooled lengthily over Kevin's 'lifestyle' (blonde wife, big dogs, £200,000 shack) and recounted the gradual winning-over of his tetchy, upstaged German team-mates. He emerged – or rather, confirmed himself – as thoroughly likeable, honest, hard-working, uxorious and money-conscious. Even his patches of naiveté were engaging. He seemed unable to grasp, for instance, the envy which smug second-raters feel towards those with more talent and a great deal more money; and he clearly didn't spot anything incongruous about his admission that, after leading England to victory in 1982, he wanted to be Prime Minister. PM or bust, by the way: he didn't wish to be a mere politician – 'I wouldn't want to mess around with the bits and bobs'.

But the question most of us dubbin-sniffers wanted the answer to was, will the stocky-thighed maestro still be around to play for England in the next World Cup? The first threat comes from his own stakhanovism: if he continues to play and promote himself at the present rate, he might burn himself out. Bill Shankly believes he must slow down if he's to make it to 1982; Brian Clough, in a recent *On the Ball*, was saying the same thing – though his advice was coloured by a certain short-haired ethical disapproval of Keegan's off-the-pitch activities. The player himself, however, explained the paradox of his position; he can no more operate at half pace than, say, Tony Currie can go flat out for 90 minutes. 'If there's no workrate there, there's nothing.'

The more likely threat is financial. Keegan

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knows he wants to leave the game in a few years' time. At Liverpool his contract was worth £22,000 per annum; at Hamburg, in his first year, £122,000; he is currently being offered half a million by Spain and the States, and a while ago there was an enquiry from Saudi Arabia. His reply was hard-headed and perhaps a little ungracious: 'I said, "I wouldn't dream of taking my wife there for less than one million pounds a year".' The enquirer, according to Keegan, 'choked', then rang back later and said he'd be in touch again (appropriately) at Christmas. Once you get locked into that sort of wealth spiral (Keegan can currently earn £2,500 for a single hour's signing session in a German department store), there probably seems no reason ever to pull out.

The spiral entered by becoming *Miss World* (BBC-1) can also lead anywhere: did you know, for instance, that our own Rosemary Franklin, victress years ago, now lives in the house where Scott Fitzgerald wrote *The Great Gatsby*? This year the jamboree – already ritualised into virtual inoffensiveness – was further defused by some technicians' plug-pulling. Switching on late, I landed on one of the contestants' auto-intros which went, 'Mya name is Lorelei Iyamma 18 years old I yamma working assa student anna model.' There were also, I noted, a lot of other contestants called Anna Model. They all seem more anodyne each year round, but Ray Moore did spot one new trend: 'It's incredible how many girls this year are graduates.' As most of these prodigies are now 17 or 18, they presumably went trotting off to varsity at 14 or so. The contestant who was tallest also had the bust that was the smallest and the hips that were the widest. She didn't win. Nor did Miss United States – 'My name is Carter Wilson' – despite the subliminal backing of two presidents. The crown went to Anna Model from Bermuda, who described herself as 'a student in wine'. Not just *of*; *in*. At Duke of Clarence University, no doubt.

Opera

Peter Conrad

Dumplings and Whipped Cream

Vienna State Opera *Kennedy Center, Washington*
Birgit Nilsson *Metropolitan Opera, New York*

As befits an imperial city, Washington imports culture rather than growing it at home. Opera companies are uncrated at the airport and installed briefly in the gilded showcase of the Kennedy Center. The Vienna troupe freighted in not only musicians but stagehands, freeloading politicians, and chefs to keep the company fuelled with dumplings and whipped cream. They also brought along some of the sloppiness which, as Mahler said, passes in Vienna for tradition. Although the acrobatic conducting of Leonard Bernstein animated *Fidelio*, and Leonie Rysanek's performance ignited *Salome*, the production of *Ariadne auf Naxos* seemed tired and dull, stuffed with singers whose careers, thanks to Viennese sentimentality, have outlived their voices.

Bernstein seldom conducts opera: his invisibility in the pit galls him. On this occasion he overcame that handicap by making his podium a springboard from which he could leap into the air with frenzied twitching arms. During the interpolated *Leonore* overture, he acted as the manic cheerleader for his own subsequent ovation. He is a gruesome vulgarian, but he does discharge energy and uplift. Otto Schenck's production of *Fidelio* is set in an ashen concentration camp, but the vital, elated leadership of Bernstein removes it from that grim Germanic locale and makes an optimistically American festivity of it: '*Fidelio*', Bernstein opines, 'should be the American national anthem', because of its defence of individual liberties. Goaded by Bernstein's enthusiasm, even the skirmish between Marzelline and Jaquino became urgent and impassioned, and the prisoners, to keep up with his excited tempi, had to run back to their cells.

For Bernstein, *Fidelio* subsumes operatic drama in choral mass or in symphony. This is why he insists on including that recapitulatory overture, and why the dialogue, with its concessions to the prosaic unmusical worries of the characters, is pruned. In Gwyneth Jones, Bernstein had a Leonore to match his own ecstatic notion of the opera. Conducting, Bernstein says, he experiences an exhilaration which is a religious afflatus: beating time is a 'priestly task'. Gwyneth Jones, with that generous, flooding voice, has the same noble fanaticism. Her exertions are desperate, and her relief, when she saves Florestan, is correspondingly jubilant. She begins the opera edgily – hunched, flinching, embarrassed by her imposture – but ends maenadically, rushing about the stage inciting the chorus to a final cacophony of joy.

In contrast with the idealism of *Fidelio*, *Ariadne auf Naxos* is about compromise – the cautious abrasion of principle, the low necessity of survival. It's a searching and self-mortifying commentary on the collaboration between Hofmannsthal and Strauss, whose operas were an uneasy alliance of opposites: psychologically complex, introverted drama coupled with needlessly sensual music. The libertine Zerbinetta represents the opportunism of Strauss and the hedonism of music, the Composer stands for the plaintive unavailing integrity of Hofmannsthal. In the prologue, the Composer compromises by allowing comedy to invade his tragedy. In the opera itself, Ariadne compromises by renouncing tragedy and accepting the comedy of erotic fulfilment. In Filippo Sanjust's production, Edita Gruberova mugs, minces, trills and giggles her way through Zerbinetta's cuteness. Zerbinetta is a wise philosopher as well as a rampaging soubrette. She specialises in slippery adjustment to altered circumstances and this, as Hofmannsthal grudgingly admits, is safer than to rail against an uncomprehending world like the Composer. The Ariadne of Gundula Janowitz was lustrously sung but frigid and stolid. Only Agnes Baltsa's Composer had the right Straussian rapture. Karl Böhm at 85 isn't quick-witted enough to control the tragi-comic collisions of the prologue, but he has the cunning to bring off that musical transformation (matching the metamorphosis Hofmannsthal dramatises in the character of Ariadne) which in the finale inflates and amplifies a chatty chamber orchestra into a Wagnerian thunderstorm.

Salome, sultrily conducted by Zubin Mehta, is designed by Jürgen Rose in homage to Klimt: the set is a nocturnal garden, its green banks webbed with gold. Leonie Rysanek sees Salome's career as a life foreshortened to a day. She starts playfully, curious about Jokanaan but childishly abashed by him and pathetically worshipful. Rejected, she is hurt into maturity. Her face sets into a fixity of calculating lust; her girlish voice opens into an instrument of sensual obsession. The final scene enacts her death as well as the Baptist's. Wrapping herself in the discarded veils as in a winding-sheet, Rysanek sings her own elegy from within this winding-sheet. She dies not under the shields of the soldiers but, like Isolde, from the annihilation of the will. The American critics, expecting a nubile teenager who can dance topless, didn't like Rysanek's Salome. I thought it magnificent, both psychologically acute and vocally radiant.

Birgit Nilsson, that trumpet-toned tycoon, stopped performing in America in 1975 when presented with a bill for half a million dollars in evaded taxes. She claimed to have been the victim of a crooked accountant, the kind who listed poodles as dependants and mink coats as tools of trade. Recently, with the aid of some astute plea-bargaining, she has relented, paid up, and celebrated her return with a gala concert at the Met in New York. She used to lie about her age. Now, past 61, she is inclined to boast about it. That imperious voice is unabated by time. It still swells oceanically, engulfing the overawed listener. Despite its heroic vehemence it can warm to humbler human emotions. The immolation from *Götterdämmerung*, included in her Met concert, was as remarkable for eloquent sorrow as for paramilitary force – a progression from invective through resignation to a galvanic glee. But Nilsson's vocal genius is for self-assertion, a superhuman pride: as an encore she nonchalantly hurled forth Brünnhilde's war cries from *Die Walküre*, the target-practice on those exposed high notes stunning in its brilliance and its ballistic accuracy.

She also despatched the final scene from *Salome*. Even in concert, a character is vividly imprinted on the music, and it's an interpretation utterly different from Rysanek's. Nilsson's Salome is vengeful not ardent. That steely voice cleaves through the orchestral din like the executioner's sword. The ecstasy of this Salome is a biological self-congratulation, as with startling sarcasm she cries to the Baptist, 'Ich lebe noch, und du bist tot.' Rysanek's final scene is a mournfully tender consummation, sung with regret; Nilsson's is the virulent triumph of the man-eating female, and recalls that famous night at the Met some 20 years ago when she polished off a trio of debilitated Tristans in a single performance. She and Rysanek, an incomparable pair, return to the Met for *Elektra* in February: so (I hope) do I.

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Films

John Coleman

If Only . . .

Letter from an Unknown Woman (A) *Camden Plaza*
Nine Months and **The Two of Them** *ICA*
A Little Romance (A) *Warner West End; ABCs Shaftesbury Avenue, Bayswater, Fulham and Edgware Roads.*
Beneath the Valley of the Ultravixens (X) *Eros, Piccadilly*

The caption informs, 'Vienna, about 1900'. A horse-drawn cab clatters down a rainy street in the early hours. Stefan (Louis Jourdan) descends, together with two elegant companions, and there is talk of a duel at 5 a.m. Up in his rooms, alone with his manservant, Stefan declares, 'Honour is a luxury only gentlemen can afford', and is preparing for a discreet departure when his man hands him an envelope. It is Ophuls territory from the beginning, though this marvellous *Letter from an Unknown Woman* (1948) was the second and finest of the four films he made in America: it is as if, whatever the country he worked in and whatever the language, Max Ophuls was irresistibly grounded in his own, his mythic and portable *alte Wien*. Here a Stefan Zweig story, scripted by Howard Koch, becomes a giant flashback. The fateful letter is unfolded and the end of the affair, picking up again from the opening, will be that its world-weary recipient goes off to pistols for two at dawn, after all. Meanwhile, the voice of Lisa (Joan Fontaine) is heard, reading from her letter, telling of her first meeting with the young Stefan, a famous concert pianist who moved in to the apartment house where she lived with her mother some years before. It is a familiar tale: one night of love, an abandonment, a child, her marriage to a diplomat, a last re-encounter with the raffish, discredited pianist (who fails to remember her), her child's death from typhus and her own from the same disease. The letter, which ends on 'If only . . .' and a blot, has been sent from a hospital. It is her husband who has issued the challenge.

The best account of this wonderfully crafted, ironic film, with its unobtrusive symmetries and echoes, is surely given by Robin Wood in his collection, *Personal Views*. Fontaine, 31 at the time, has hardly been finer, almost convincing as the lovelorn young maid on a swing, utterly so as the later sophisticated and suffering lady. Her impulsive, open-eyed candour is perfect for the night with Stefan as, in swift succession, they dine on lobster, drive in an open carriage, watch foreign countries slide by at a funfair railway, finally dance to a fed-up band of women musicians who just want to go home. It is only matched by the growing torment of her second and last meeting with Stefan in his old apartment, where Jourdan's brittle, practised seducer's patter impels her to disillusioned flight. Everything has its place in this bitter-sweet little world, from Stefan's sending his man out for a late supper ('the usual things'), her stiff-lipped husband's ultimatum delivered against a pair of crossed duelling swords on the wall, a couple of railway station departure scenes ('Two weeks', promise both Stefan and, much later, her little son), down to the excellent harshness of a closing exchange between man and servant: '*You* remembered her,' says Stefan and his faithful John simply nods, scribbling down her name. It is only afterwards, and as a matter of unimportance, that one is likely to register the impossibility of that letter, which – if the images apparently invoked by it are thought on – must contain much that its writer could never have witnessed.

Marta Meszaros's *Adoption*, her fifth feature, left me pretty cold, which is why I probably overreacted the other day at a viewing of her next two films, *Nine Months* and *The Two of Them*, currently running in tandem at the ICA: they came as revelations, not so much as contentious items in the struggle for the liberation of women (they *are* that) but as particularly extraordinary and brave and open-ended examinations of man-woman relations in Hungary, something of a bastion of machismo. The first has small Lili Monori of the pudgy, mutinous, freckled face acting her heart out, and genuinely giving birth to a baby at the very end, as a factory girl already with a small son by an ex-lover and now being brutalised into loving melancholy, humourless Jan Nowicki as her foreman. 'You use me like an animal,' she protests, and then relents: 'Come here.' By the close, she has cut free, taken a job in another town, had the foreman's child on her own; but it is the physical ambivalence, the sheer bodily difficulty of making her getaway, that is so strikingly presented.

This is even truer of the second film, which confusingly carries on with the same Monori and Nowicki characters (they have the same fictional names, at any rate), only with some differences of past and personality. Attention here rather shifts to the spellbinding Marina Vlady as the director of a women's hostel who befriends Lili and her daughter by Novicki and either falls apart or is sexually liberated in the process: the occasion allows a choice of interpretation. Vlady's sudden bursts of absurd gaiety are inspired, inspiring, even if her inert and pompous husband does seem a director's cop-out. Jamos Kende photographs superbly.

George Roy Hill's *A Little Romance* is mostly dire, with Mr Hill intent in the initial minutes on establishing himself as a European director, complete with self-homage (a kid watches his *Butch Cassidy* dubbed into French) and borrowings from Truffaut (kid pinches a still of Robert Redford). The lad is 13-year-old Daniel (forgettable Thelonious Bernard), genius son of a French taxi-driver, who falls for young Lauren (memorable Diane Lane), genius daughter of a flighty, caricatural much-married rich lady. Lauren reads Heidegger for fun and, for more fun, urges Daniel to run away for a fortnight with her to Venice, where they will kiss beneath the Bridge of Sighs, and so love for ever. This idiot notion has been planted by one Julius, an ageing pickpocket of gentlemanly mien, who is gulled into helping the precocious truants and is – alas – played by Laurence Olivier as if he had been invited to parody both himself and Maurice Chevalier. Russ Meyer's hymn to gargantuan mammaries, *Beneath the Valley of the Ultravixens*, is actually beneath something else.

Theatre

Benedict Nightingale

In Sniddle

Candleford by KEITH DEWHURST *Cottesloe*
Landmarks by NICK DARKE *Lyric Studio, Hammersmith*

Every time I cross Piccadilly Circus, sidestepping the cute little piles of vomit and trying not to inhale whatever glue-substitute is spluttering out of those quaint little hamburger carts, I catch myself internally a-babbling of green fields; and every time I go on to think of the pumice-and-neon horrors which will one day replace that charmless slum, my nostalgia becomes chronological as well as geographic. Oh, to be in sniddle or shippon with yilve and riddle, like the characters in *Landmarks*. Oh, to be singing yeomanly choruses, like the cast at the National.

Others, too, must in some sort share these hankerings. How else to explain the popularity of Keith Dewhurst's first extract from Flora Thompson's country memoir, *Lark Rise to Candleford*, and the decision of the National's nabobs to commission and stage another? People seem prepared to spend four-odd hours on their feet in the pit of the Cottesloe, milling about, craning their necks, and leaping aside as actors crash from forge to post-office or swish scythes past their assembled legs. They are ready to tolerate the discomfort that goes with the apparent premise of Bill Bryden's 'promenade production', that they are time-travellers who have arrived by space-warp from another plane of reality and are as invisible as the unpolluted air to the Victorian yokels cavorting around them; and they seem equally ready to be bored. The accusation long ago levelled at the two acts of *Waiting for Godot* might be better applied to the two parts of the Thompson saga: 'nothing happens, twice.'

But that very 'nothing' is, of course, precisely the play's appeal and charm. Serenity and order is what many crave nowadays, and what *Candleford* vicariously offers them. Squire Timothy is in command of manor, village and hunt. Mrs Timms rules the post office, and little Laura, our narrator and guide, is learning the trade from her. Mrs Gubbins gossips, as people called Mrs Gubbins always do. The workmen are either in the foundry, or noshing their tea, or taking their weekly baths. The vicar appears and is duly anatomised. 'He's good to the poor.' Pause. 'Yes, he has extensive private means and puts them to good use.' True, tiny tremors temporarily discompose the tranquillity. A post-office worker makes a clandestine visit to her husband, sick in Reading Jail. A postman refuses out of religious conviction to make Sunday-evening collections, and looks likely to be sacked. But otherwise nothing much happens, once or twice, yesterday, today or tomorrow.

To conclude that nothing had been lost with the decay of such villages as Candleford and Lark Rise would, however, be an exaggeration. There clearly was a sense of community, of caring and sharing, though in so fixed a hierarchy it tended to express itself in pater-

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nalist styles. There was a pride in manual skills, as there needed to be, since more material rewards were skimpy. There was, perhaps, a cloistered content that did not complain because it could not conceive of change. The criticism of *Candleford* is that it ventures less far into the spidery innards of the Victorian closet than its predecessor, *Lark Rise*, which did at least show a tearful old man hauled off to the workhouse and a 12-year-old mite hired as a 15-hour-a-day skivvy for an annual £2.10s. Only at the play's coda, in which Laura, alias Flora Thompson, is sneered at by a philistine husband for her literary aspirations, do we feel anything oppressive in those attitudes or suffocating in that environment which, on the whole, both book and play gently celebrate.

An unnaturally mellow, benign and forgiving curator has assembled the exhibits in this particular museum, and for a while it looks as if his first cousin may be responsible for *Landmarks*. We poor deprived Londoners are to jam our noses against the glass, watching farmers clump through the glebe and hearing their colourful banter: 'Bin brudgen t'edge avver? Bit leggy innit?' The characters are less lucid than in *Candleford* and, most of them, less sophisticated: which is strange, since their story is set 50-odd years later.

They have a special dread of 'them devious buggers, boggarts', meaning ghosts, one of whom turns up in the guise of a dreamy priest who spends his hols sallying like Tennyson's brook in and out of the fern. At any rate, they clap him in the parish stocks; and, after he is surreptitiously freed, conclude that he has the capacity to dematerialise and proceed to blame his vengeful influence for every subsequent agricultural setback. When this 'boggart' rambles back in four years later, it looks as if we may be in for the violent climax of David Rudkin's *Afore Night Come*, at which an innocuous tramp was ritually slaughtered by Warwickshire fruit-pickers; but instead of transforming anecdote into melodrama, Mr Darke simply stops in mid-tale, disappointing us another way. There's good writing in *Landmarks*, and some sensitivity in its observation of men floundering between old ways and new; but also an implausibility that even Peter Egan's capably-acted production cannot remove.

Weekend Competition

Competition No 2590 asked for acronyms for itinerant randies on the Continent of Europe. After a lively debate, Control intervened: the command 'Kill it!' went out. Several suicides followed and a great crowd gathered in Great Turnstile, led by an indignant Fatboy. Control promises Comp 2591 next week with a full explanation.

No 2593 **Set by Basil Ransome-Davies**

Straight-faced naive reviews of 'difficult' works, please, e.g. *Ulysses* ('we are given entertaining glimpses of Irish city life'). 150 words max., by 7 December.

Tony Miles

Chess

No 156 **June Problems**

Problem solutions have fallen a long way behind during my absence at the Interzonals (the wonderful efficiency of the Brazilian postal service didn't help too much either) but I hope to catch up fairly soon.

The June set were pretty easy, though number **137** must have caused a red face or two. In **Problem 135 (1nq3kl / r3blpl / p3prNp / 1pp5 / 4Q3 / 2P1P1B1 / P4PPP / 2R2RK1)** White has a nice killer in 1.Q-R8! but unfortunately it is not really any more efficient than the mundane 1.B-K5, R-KB2 (or ...R-B4; 2.BxN, QxB; 3.QxPch, R-B2; 4.N-K5, etc.); 2.BxN, QxB; 3.N-K5, R-B3 (or ... R-B1; 4.N-B6, Q-N2; 5.QxPch and 6.NxR); 4.N-B6, Q-N2 (... Q-R1; 5.NxBch); 5.P-B3! R-R1 (else NxR); 6.NxBch winning. Both lines net an exchange.

Problem 136 (1r1r2kl / p4ppp / 1qp5 / 4Pb2 / 3b1P2 / 1PP2N2 / P2BQ1PP / 2KR3R) was a simple mating combination: 1 ...QxP! 2.PxQ, RxP and White has no satisfactory defence to the threat of ...R-N8 mate, e.g. 3.B-K1, B-K6ch; 4.any, R-N8mate.

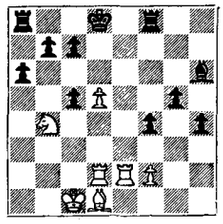
Problem 137 (8 / 8 / 8 / 5Bpl / 7k / 4p3 / 5PKP / 8) as I said caused a little embarrassment. One solver even thought that the diagram must have been wrong as "1 ...P-K7 wins immediately". However, it is not quite that easy. After 1 ...P-K7 White has three possibilities. 2.P-B3? loses to ...P-K8=Q; 3B-N4, Q-K7ch; 4.K-N1, Q-R7; 5.K-R1 (B moves also fail), Q-KB7 creating zugzwang. 2.P-R3? fails to P-N5! (but not the immediate ...P-K8=Q? 3.B-N4!) followed by ...P-K8=Q. But 2.B-N4! draws. On 2 ...P-K8=Q comes 3.P-R3! permanently shutting the BK out of the game – White just moves his king back and forth and Black can achieve nothing – while on 2 ...KxB there is 3.P-B3ch followed by 4.K-B2 with a trivial draw.

In **Problem 138 (5nkl / 2b1q1p1 / 2p5 / 3pP1pQ / 1r1P2P1 / 3B1R2 / 5PP1 / 6K1)** White wins by 1.RxNch, KxQ (QxR; 2.B-R7ch mates); 2. Q-R8ch! K-B2; 3.B-N6ch! K-K3 (... KxB; 4.Q-R5 mate); 4.Q-N8ch, K-Q2; 5.B-B5ch and mate in two. Much less efficient though is 2.B-N6 when Black can struggle on with ...R-N8ch; 3.BxR (not 3.K-R2, BxPch) P-N3.

Prizewinners: Messrs McSheehy, Bradley, Johnson, Thorat, Deshmukh, Chand and Carr (£6 each) with consolation prizes to Messrs Nash, Sobey, Hughson and Sahasrabudhe (£2 each).

Problem 156

White to play. How should the game go? Answers to me at the NEW STATESMAN postmarked not later than 5 December.

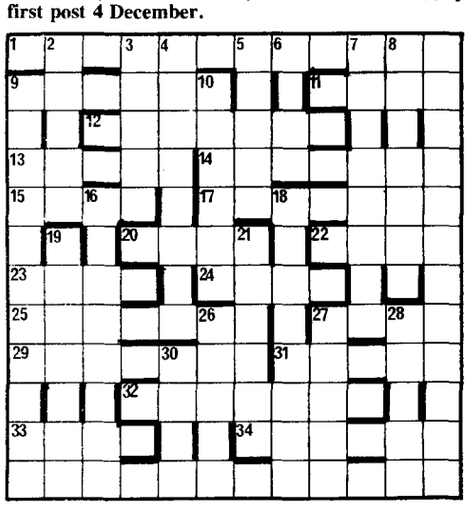


Solution to problem 154

(a) ...P-R5 loses trivially to 2.P-N6. (d) 1 ... K-Q7 also fails simply to 2.N-B1ch, K-K8; 3.P-N6. (b) 1 ...K-Q5 loses neatly to 2.N-N4! K-Q4; 3.K-N3, K-K3; 4.N-K3!! P-R5; 5.KxP, P-R6; 6.K-N4, P-R7; 7.N-B2. (c) 1 ...K-Q6! is correct and draws eg, 2.N-Q5, P-R5; 3.P-N6, P-R6; 4.K-N3!? K-B5! 5.N-K3ch, K-Q6! 6.N-Q5, K-B5! 7.N-B3, KxN; 8.P-N7, P-B7! 9.KxP, P-R7; 10.P-N8=Q, K-N7.

Salamanca 24: 'Literary Quotation'

PRIZES: Book tokens of £2 for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Salamanca 24, New Statesman, Great Turnstile, London WC1V 7HJ, by first post 4 December.



The quotation, beginning at 1, reading clockwise around the grid perimeter, and completed by the unclued answers at 14 and 34 is what Salamanca would like to hear his solvers say. (Its unchecked letters give ARCH QUOTATION'S BRASH — I leave.)

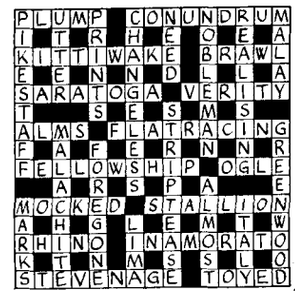
ACROSS

9 Spenser discomfited by lady in foreign country, according to him (6)
11 Rikki's jungle foe, with endless distraint once, swallowing one (4)
12 Longfellow's tent-folders deserted? Yes, if foreign, and found in mountain peak (7)
13 Like Shelley's cold seeds, almost, even, any (5)
15 I finds a friend in every one – you'll find me on board (4)
17 Holy writ which has hearts in a whirl out East, when going in? (7)
20 Her worshipper a midnight reveller – and one cavorting? (4)
22 E.g. Zeppelin, taking lead in German flying force (4)
23 *Unlike the winter wind from* the South even (4)
24 Lear's counterpart caught in some vile recreation (4)
25 Terrain unsound? That *may* not bother one like H. Cecil! (7)
27 When Salamanca's at home, what the old folks do? (4)
29 Indication of evil, say? From that time when Scots drowned first youngster in Ness perhaps (7)
31 Over which to say 'Tomorrow is St Crispian' and describe feats done (5)
32 Iron, as time's difficult? (7)
33 Driver, hard, used in game (4)

DOWN

2 Fibre obtained from moist leaves (5)
3 Swerve – does this, avoiding women? (5)
4 My 'ondine', as you might have it, was Selene (8)
5 What the Boy Scouts Organisation consists of, boss etc. excluded (5)
6 The sound of bees as used to be heard, endlessly strong around head of honeysuckle? (4)
7 Top racecourse (which one?) which produces a continually *fine shower* (8)
8 A grid constructed before noon – this, in other words? (7)
10 Sleep on a long Church cloth (6)
16 For crafty hand-use, stuck around bottom of sock? (8)
18 Re a sort of fuel from the East – J. Hunt's car uses it! (8)
19 Waves at their highest? Pier smashed, wow! (7)
21 Worm in sea or, possibly, in nest (6)
26 Some inconsequential beings (5)
27 Constellation's name's translated as Table, people have it (5)
28 Immigrant settling Stateside, eastern in origins (5)
30 The gaping mouth of Hell? (4)

Solution to No 1322



Prizewinners to No 1322

Charles Duce (Finland)
Dr J. Baker (Hersham)
A. E. Burrows (London SW16)

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National Council for One Parent Families

South London Project

The National Council for One Parent Families recently received a grant for a minimum of three years to establish a branch in South London. The office will be in Clapham and its catchment area will include all South London Boroughs. Initially four people will be employed, the success of the initiative will then determine the rate of expansion. Whilst the catchment area is large it is hoped that many aspects of the advice work will be community based. The office will offer an advice service to single parents on all the problems they face.

The project will be supervised by the Senior Advice Worker at the Kentish Town Office and there will be regular consultation on policy with the Director. The post of Community Social Worker has already been filled and applications are invited for the remaining three posts.

Rights Worker

We require someone with experience of the workings of the Social Security system, an ability to represent clients at appeals and a willingness to liaise with statutory and voluntary organisations. The worker will be expected to develop expertise on rights matters for single parents and to advise colleagues on policy matters and changes. An ability to write clearly and previous experience in information work would be desirable.

Legal Worker

We are looking for applicants with working experience of family and welfare law. The successful candidate would be involved in advising individuals in some tribunal and court work and in advising colleagues on legal changes, legislation and policy matters.

Office Secretary

We require a full time office secretary. The secretary will be responsible for typing letters, reports and other documents. We are looking for candidates who have had experience of reception work and an ability to deal sympathetically with people. The secretary would also have overall responsibility for all case records.

Salary will be on the appropriate local government scale and is likely to be between £4,300 and £5,200 depending on the job, age, qualifications and experience. For further details ring **Harry Fletcher** or **Paul Lewis** on **01-267 1361** or write for application forms and further details to: **The Director, 255 Kentish Town Road, London NW5.** The closing date for all applications will be **12 December.**

NATIONAL UNION OF TEACHERS

NEGOTIATIONS OFFICER

SALARIES & SUPERANNUATION DEPARTMENT

Applications are invited for the post of Negotiations Officer in the salaries and superannuation department of the National Union of Teachers.

The department is responsible to the executive for the policy and work of the union in the fields of salaries, superannuation and national insurance. This includes responsibility for all the negotiating work for the union in respect of teachers' salaries, pensions and servicing the union side of a number of national negotiating bodies.

The negotiating officer's main responsibilities will be to assist the senior official and the official in the department in pay and negotiations.

Applicants should have experience of negotiating or research in these fields, particularly pay bargaining together with a degree and/or other relevant qualifications and experience.

The person appointed will serve under the General Secretary of the Union.

Salary scale is £6,924 to £7,575 + £72 p.a. + £476 p.a. London allowance.

Further details and application form may be obtained from:

The General Secretary,
National Union of Teachers,
Hamilton House,
Mabledon Place,
London WC1H 9BD
or by telephone **01-387 2442 ext. 150**

Completed application forms should be returned not later than Friday, 7 December, 1979.

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for its

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Salary: £5,000 per annum subject to current negotiations.

For further information write to **The General Secretary, War on Want, 467 Caledonian Road, London N7 9BE.** Mark envelopes 'SSU Co-ordinator'. Closing date for applications **12 December 1979.**

THE LABOUR PARTY

requires

SECRETARY TO THE BROADCASTING OFFICER

Knowledge of the media and an interest in politics would be helpful. Good telephone manner essential.

Salary range: £4,265-£4,435 p.a., depending on appropriate experience in a similar capacity. 33¾ hr. week. L.V's. provided.

Apply to:

The Administrative and Personnel Officer,
The Labour Party,
Transport House, Smith Square,
London SW1P 3JA
Tel. 01-834 9434

HOWARD LEAGUE FOR PENAL REFORM

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

required to promote voluntary work towards reforms in the penal system, especially through the formation of new branches, and liaison with existing ones; to organise recruitment of members and fund-raising; and to take on specific tasks in information publicity, etc., as required.

Applicants will require administrative ability; they should have knowledge or experience of the penal system or be willing to acquire it. Some travelling.

Salary not less than £4,500.

Further information from **Martin Wright, Director, Howard League for Penal Reform, 169 Clapham Road, London SW9 0PU.** Telephone: **01-735 3773.**

Closing date for applications: 12.12.79.

Greater London Arts Association

25/31 Tavistock Place
London WC1H 9SF
01-388 2211

Writer in Residence — The Mary Ward Centre, London WC1

Applications are invited from published creative writers in any field for the position of Writer in Residence at this Adult Literary Institute for the period January to June 1980.

The writer will be expected to work for 1 to 2 days a week in this period, working with established groups run by the centre and initiating groups and activities within the locality, especially encouraging new writers.

The writer will receive an award of £1,000. There will also be an opportunity to teach further paid classes and to organise short courses and events.

Further details may be obtained from the address below. Applications must be received by **10 December 1979,** and should be addressed to **The Literature Officer, GLAA, 25-31 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9SF.**

RESEARCH OFFICER

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Your job will cover the design of small scale research projects, a certain amount of fieldwork, interviewing both clients and staff and statistical analysis of the subsequent data, together with writing appropriate reports and presenting results to management.

You will also be involved in designing and setting up a new management information system to provide data for policy reviews and the structuring of capital programmes.

You should have an appropriate degree and some research training, including a knowledge of statistical and computer techniques, preferably allied to some experience in a branch of the Social Services. For further details you can ring **John Belcher, Assistant Chief Social Services Officer,** on **303 7777 Ext. 2097** or write for an application form to: **Personnel Section, Directorate of Housing and Personal Services, Room 233, Civic Offices, Broadway, Bexleyheath, for return by Wednesday 12 December.**

I. M. MARSH CAMPUS **LIVERPOOL POLYTECHNIC**

FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICAL AND OUTDOOR EDUCATION

Applications are invited for the post of

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(Salary Scale £4,470-£8,253)

Candidates should possess strong academic qualifications in Sociological studies in Physical Education. Knowledge and experience of Philosophical aspects of Physical Education or research design and application would also be an advantage.

Experience in teaching the following practical areas is highly desirable:
(i) Netball (ii) Athletics

The person appointed would be expected to contribute to the range of work undertaken by the female students studying Physical Education in professional and non-vocational courses, including the preparation of specialist teachers of Physical Education on the C.N.A.A., B.Ed. and B.Ed. (Hons) courses.

This vacancy offers an excellent opportunity for any teacher or lecturer wishing to extend their experience within a specialised institution. The person appointed is expected to possess qualified teacher status and have teaching experience and a sympathetic understanding of the work of teachers and schools. The person appointed could be involved in the supervision of students on teaching practice in a range of secondary schools.

Application forms and further particulars can be obtained from **The Principal, I. M. Marsh College of Physical Education, Barkhill Road, Liverpool L17 6BD. Tel: 051-724 2321.**

Closing date for applications is **Friday 7 December 1979.**

BANKING, INSURANCE AND FINANCE UNION

appointment of

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for the

MANCHESTER AREA

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Please apply for an application form and Job Description to **John James, National Organiser, BIFU, 102 Bute Street, Cardiff CF1 6AD. All application forms to be completed and returned by Thursday 6 December 1979.**

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UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH

DEPARTMENT OF DRAMA

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Please send applications, including curriculum vitae and the names of three referees, to **Dean Tom Settle, College of Arts, University of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario, N1G 2W1.** Closing date for applications, 31 January 1980. Position subject to final budgetary approval.

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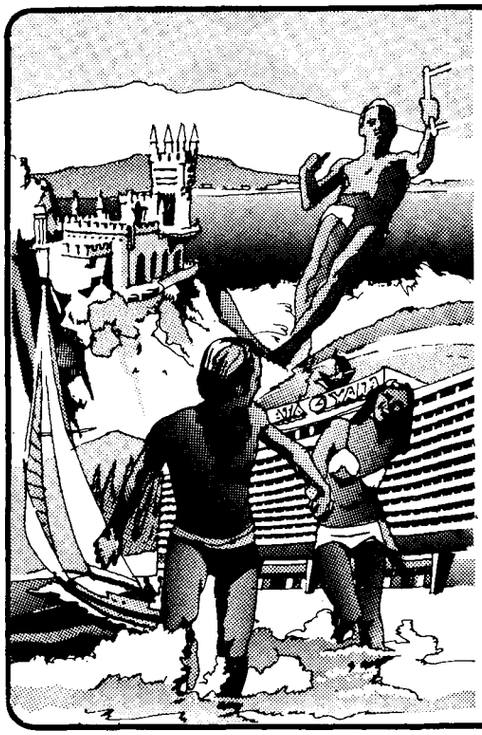

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Award

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WIN £1,000

The Award will again consist of one prize of £1,000 given to the entrant whose work, in the opinion of the independent panel of judges, did most to focus attention on nutrition and nutrition problems and resulted in a better public understanding of some aspect of human nutrition. Entries must have been published or broadcast during the 12 months ending 31 December 1979. Closing date for entries is 15 January 1980.

This Award was introduced last year by Van den Berghs & Jurgens Limited who, as a major food company and the principal producers of margarines, cooking fats and oils in the UK, have been developing a non-commercial nutrition programme for over fifteen years.

A copy of the Rules and Conditions of Entry is available from:

The Nutrition Education Service
Van den Berghs & Jurgens Limited
Sussex House Burgess Hill West Sussex RH15 9AW
Tel Burgess Hill (std code 04446) 46300

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Publications

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Brigid Brophy — **Maureen Colquhoun**
Alex Comfort — **Germaine Greer**
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THE GREENLIST. A fortnightly list of antiquarian and o/p books. Sample copy free. Wrigleys Books, Ecclesfield, Sheffield.

YOUR BOOK PUBLISHED by New Horizon. Details: Dept. NS, 5 Victoria Drive, Bognor Regis, West Sussex.

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LIBRARIES BOUGHT. Hammersmith Books, Barnes High St, London SW13. 01-876 7254.

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STUDIO FLAT in modern court (lift, porter etc). Suit 1 or 2. Excellent position Finchley Rd, NW3. Fully furn. £50 p.w. incl. c.h. & hot water. Company let preferred. Tel. 01-458 9803 8-10 a.m.; 6-8 p.m.

SURBITON, 16 mins Waterloo: 3-bedrm town house. £65 p.w. Leatherhead 72619.

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CYCLING SOCIAL WORKER, male, 29, seeks room in shared house or flat in South London. Box 7047.

AMERICAN DOCTOR and wife need s/c. accomm. London Dec.-May. Tel. 01-788 0444.

MALE STUDENT, 33, seeks own room in house/flat share, reasonably central, N or W London preferred. Up to £20 per week. Tel. 029-34-74541 after 7.

CANADIAN PROFESSOR, with wife and high-school-age son, on sabbatical leave, want furnished, centrally-heated, two-bedroom accommodation in any not too impossible part of London for twelve months from July 1980. Box 7102.

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Theatres

ALDWYCH (Royal Shakespeare Company). 836 6404. Recorded bkg into 836 5332. Gorky's 'Children of the Sun', 'Measure for Measure'. See daily press for dates and times. RSC also at The Warehouse in Pam Gems' 'Piaf' and Peter Whelan's 'Captain Swing'.

HAMPSTEAD THEATRE. 'Uncle Vanya' by Anton Chekhov. A new version by Pam Gems. Prevs from 22 Nov. 8 p.m. First night 28 Nov. 7 p.m. Subs evgs 8 p.m. Sat. Mat. 4.30. Box office 722 9301.

NATIONAL THEATRE. 928 2252. 'Richard III', 'Undiscovered Country', prevs 'When We Are Married', 'Candleford' & 'Lark Rise' (all tickets standing). See daily press for dates & times or ring 928 2256 for recorded information.

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Cinema

SCREEN ON THE HILL. 435 3366 (opp. Belsize Park Tube). Woody Allen's 'Manhattan' (AA). 3.30, 5.30, 7.30, 9.30.

Literary

MATCHLIGHT: British Poetry Today, Orangery, Holland Pk. 13 Dec., 7.15 p.m. Howard Sergeant & Barry L. Pearce + Byron Readings. 01-352 7409.

Exhibition

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Meetings

GRESHAM LECTURES IN MEDICAL SCIENCE

Some Aspects of the Physiology of the Endocrine System by Professor D. Slome

3 one-hour lectures at The City University, Northampton Square, EC1 at 6 p.m. 27 November, 11 and 13 December.

ADMISSION FREE

BRITISH SOCIETY for Social Responsibility in Science Tenth Anniversary Meeting, Friday 23 Nov. 7.30-10.30 p.m. The New Theatre, London School of Economics, Houghton St, WC2. A meeting to mark ten years of activity and to plan for the future. Speakers: Maurice Wilkins FRS, (President of BSSRS), Joseph Needham, Jonathan Rosenhead, Dorothy Griffiths, Mike Cooley. Active participants in the radical science movement from the '30's to the '80's will describe their experiences, assess the significance of BSSRS in its historical context and discuss the future direction for radical science. Entrance — 75p and 40p (unwaged). BSSRS, 9 Poland St, London W1.

MINORITY RIGHTS GROUP lecture: Prof. Ralf Dahrendorf on 'Minority rights and minority rule', 6.30 p.m. on Wednesday 5 December at 10 St James's Square, London SW1. Admission free.

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PUBLIC LECTURES
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Wed. 28 Nov. at 5.30, The William Townsend Lecture by Mr Kenneth Martin, 'Chance and Order'.

Thurs. 6 Dec. at 5.30, The Neale Lecture in English History by Professor D. C. Coleman, 'Mercantilism Revisited'.

Complete list of public lectures from Publications Office, University College London, Gower St, WC1E 6BT.

(Stamped envelope required).

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON: The 1979 Creighton Lecture will be given by Dr J. Needham, FRS, FBS (Director, East Asian History of Science Library, Cambridge) entitled: 'The Guns of Kaifêng Fu: China's Development of Man's First Chemical Explosive' at 5.30 p.m. on Monday, 26 November 1979 at the University of London, Senate House (Beveridge Hall), Malet Street, London WC1E 7HU. Admission free, without ticket. Academic Registrar.

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON, Gower Street, WC1E 6BT. Lunch-Hour Lectures. 1.20 to 2. 27 Nov. 'Mitochondria and Oncogenesis' by Dr D. Wilkie; 29 Nov. 'Seven Days', 1974, and 'Colour Separation', 1974-76. Films directed by Chris Welsby.

LABOUR AND POWER—translating the Party's aspirations into legislation. 1979 Autumn Lecture Series, Roy Hattersley (28 November), John Silkin (4 December), Peter Shore (10 December). All at 7.30 p.m. at Mary Sumner House, 24 Tufton Street, SW1. Tickets 75p each from Fabian Society, 11 Dartmouth Street, SW1 (222 8877).

LSE SOCIETY SPECIAL LECTURE. Baroness Seear on 'Equal Opportunities—the Way Ahead: A review of the impact of the legislation for equal opportunities for women and ethnic minorities'. Tues. 27 Nov. at 5.30 p.m. Admission free. LSE, Houghton St, WC2.

NUCLEAR POWER. Monday 26 Nov. at 7-10 p.m. Speakers: Brian Sedgemore, Alex Eadie MP, John Chesshire, Prof. Terrence Burlin. Large Lecture Theatre, Polytechnic of Central London, New Cavendish St, W1. £1 (50p Fablans), tickets at door.

DAVID LIPSEY, former Political Adviser at No. 10—Labour's Economic Record in the 1970s. Tuesday 27 Nov. 7.30 p.m. LSE, Houghton St, London WC2. Organised by the Young Fabians.

SHAW SOCIETY. Friday 30 November, Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq., WC1. Audrey Williamson on 'The Real Genius of Bernard Shaw. An Answer to Michael Holroyd'. Coffee 6.30 p.m. Meeting 7 p.m.

BRITAIN IN THE 80s an industrial wasteland? Speaker Reg Birch, Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist). Fri. 30 Nov. 7.30. Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq., Holborn, WC1.

ICA EVENTS, The Mall, SW1. 27 Nov. 7.30 Adrian Forty on 'What Was the Ideal Home And Who Was It For?' accompanying the Arts Council/V & A exhibition at the Hayward. 80p. 930 3647.

THEOSOPHY: S.a.e. for pamphlets, book list, programme. Sun. 25 Nov. 8 p.m. Open Q/A Meeting, 'Reincarnation & Karma'. ULT, 62 Queen's Gardens, London W2 3AL.

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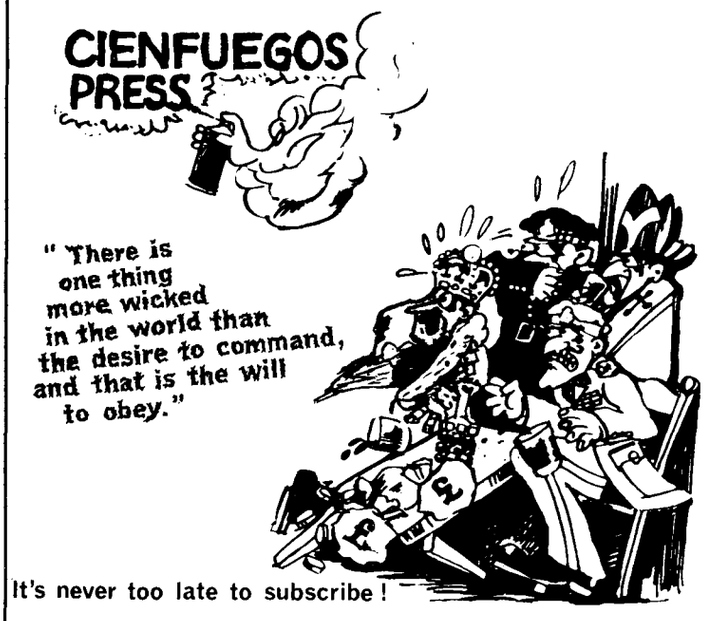

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